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THE NEW YORKER

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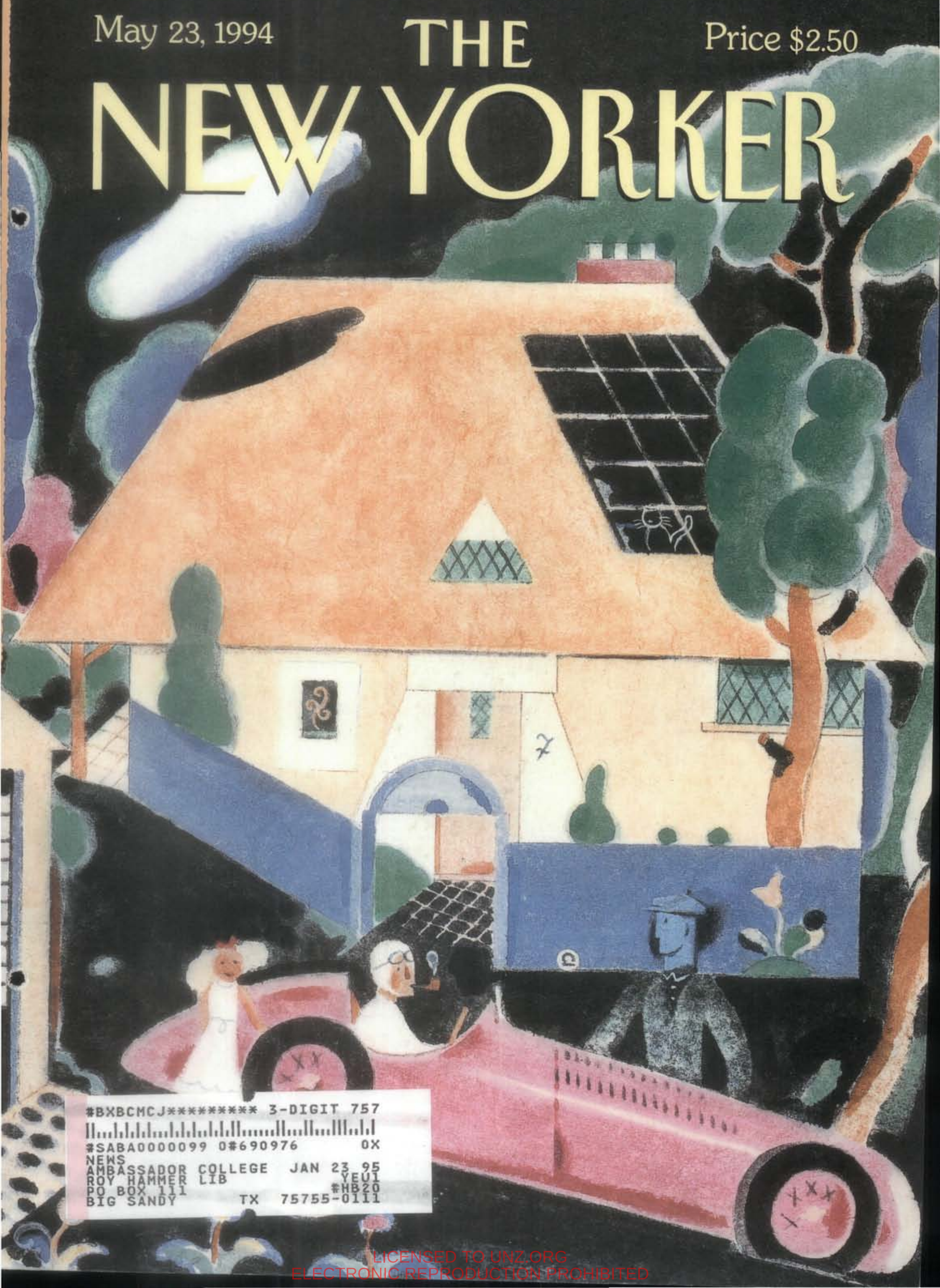

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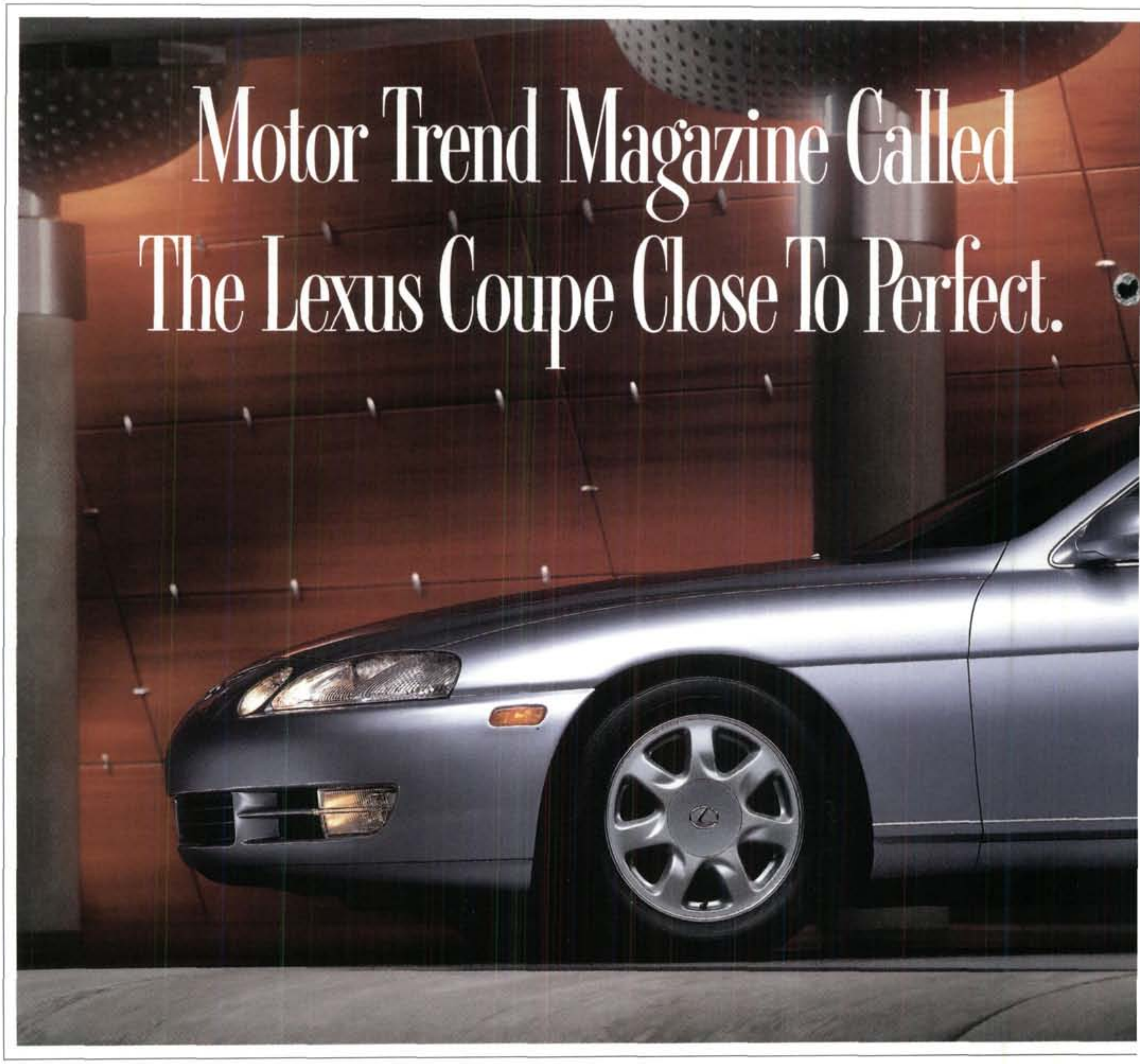
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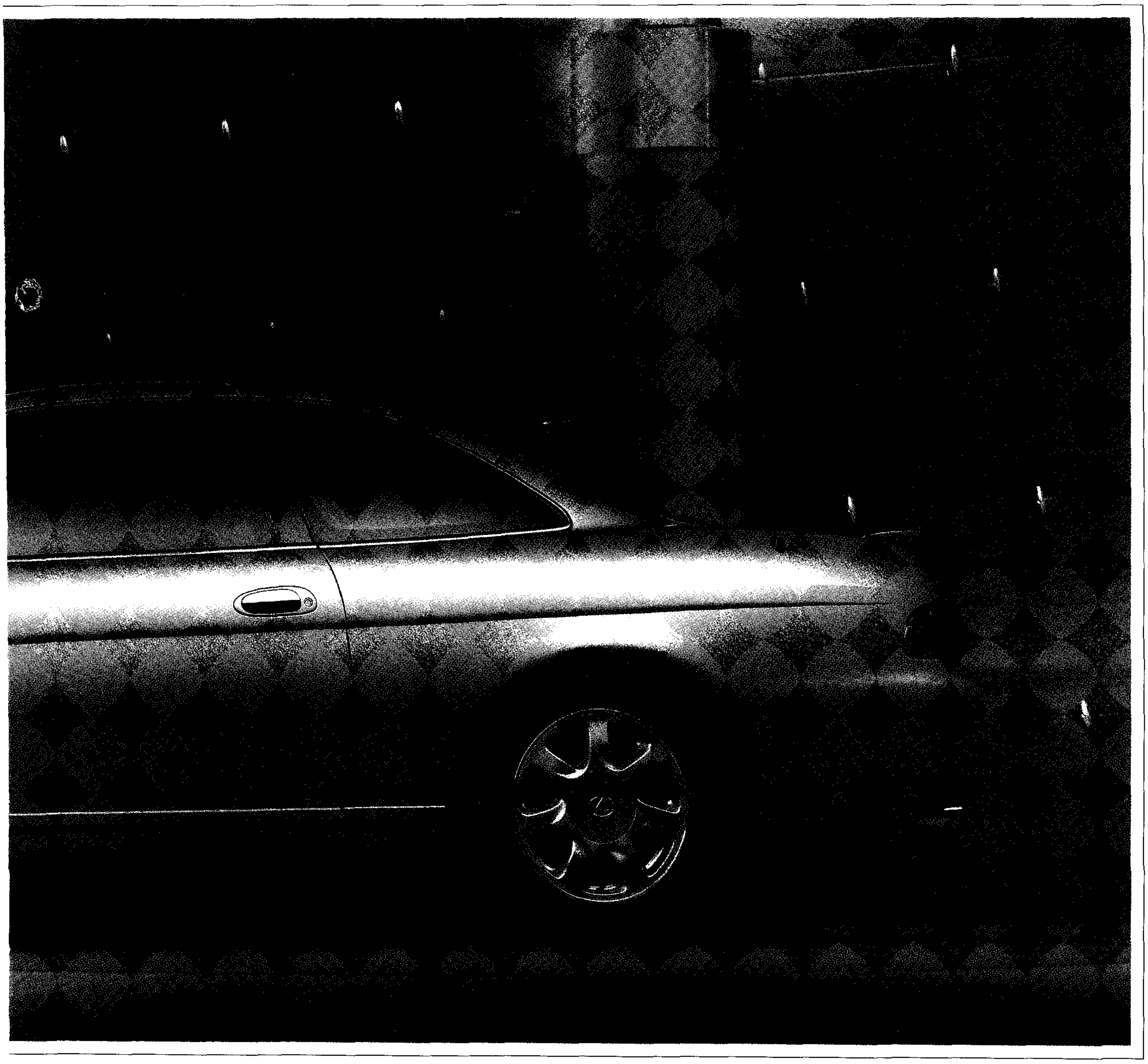

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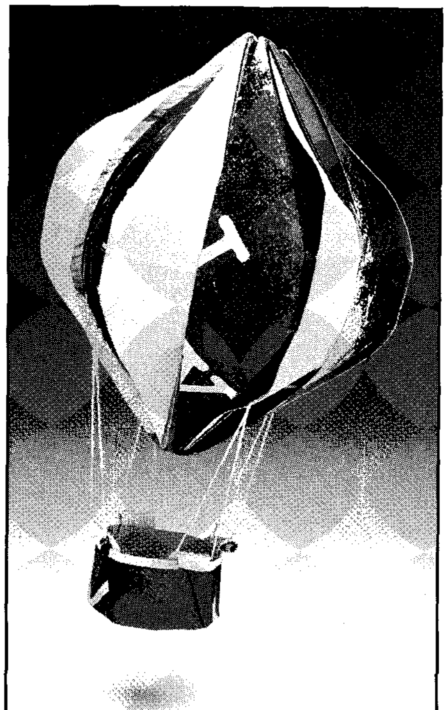

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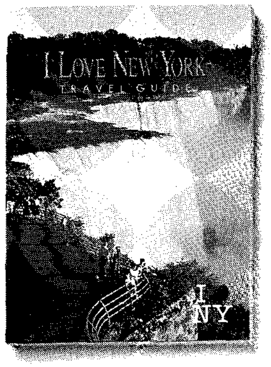

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THE NEW YORKER

MAY 23, 1994

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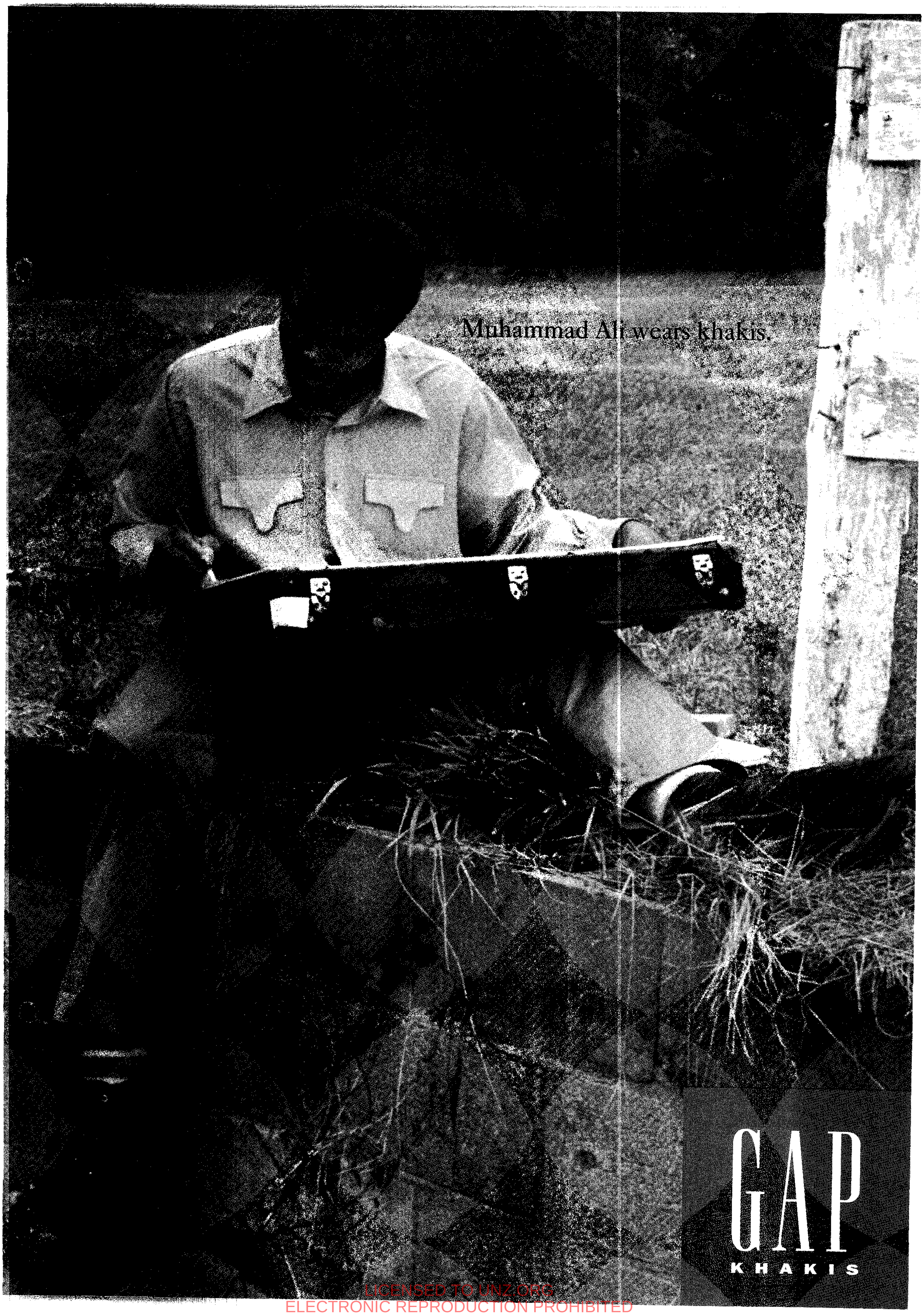
THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for three combined issues: the last week of December and the first week of January, the last week of June and the first week of July, and the last two weeks of August) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXX, No.14, May 23, 1994. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $65.27 (includes G.S.T.). Other foreign, one year, $76.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322. PRINTED IN U.S.A.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COMMENT

INDECENT EXPOSURE

HE dropped his *pants*? This is the point in Paula Jones's account of her alleged hotel-room interlude, three years ago, with then Governor Bill Clinton at which many people find disbelief a thing they can no longer willingly suspend. A compliment whose implications might have been misconstrued, a bit of flattery with or without intent, even a frank proposition (which is what Ms. Jones asserts accompanied the undoing of the gubernatorial trousers)—these are incidents common enough among human beings to carry some narrative plausibility. But an unsolicited unveiling seems a little over the mark.

We suspect that Ms. Jones's credibility problems are only just beginning. She has possibly been tricked into a false sense of security by the support and encouragement she has so far received from the anti-Clinton conservative media. But the anti-Clinton conservative media are as nothing to the mainstream media, which have no ideological scruples to restrain them from picking clean anyone willing to make his or her private life a subject of public interest. Unless Ms. Jones has led a life far more blameless than the rest of us have, she can look forward to further unpleasant exposure. It is not a promising sign that one of her sisters has already described her as, in effect, a gold-digger.

It's true that Ms. Jones's character and motives are not, legally, at issue. Revelations about her past, if any are forthcoming, ought not to affect the adjudication of her claim against Mr. Clinton. But it's also true that the culture that permits her to advance that claim—the culture that regards the conduct she says took place as worthy of public exposure and condemnation—is also the culture that finds nothing too intimate or too embarrassing to broadcast on the evening news. If Ms. Jones can describe the man who is now the President of the United States taking down his pants in a hotel room, and see her account printed in the *Times*, then she can hardly expect the *Times* (or anyone, for that matter) to find other people's tales about her life unfit to print.

Ms. Jones and her story are, in short,

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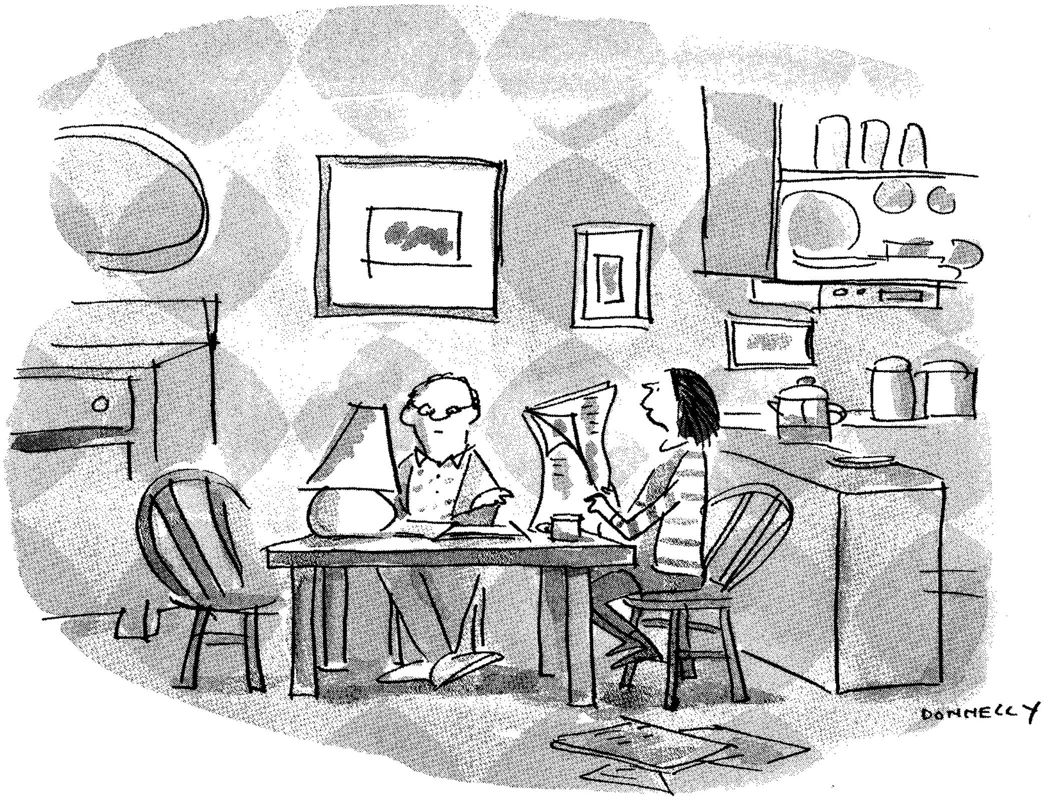

"Isn't it great that we still have Dan Quayle to kick around?"

in the mill. Everyone knows that they're in the mill, and that the mill grinds this sort of thing exceeding fine these days. The question that people who are not hellbent on discrediting President Clinton are asking themselves is: Do we really have to live through this thing?

The answer seems to be yes. One reason—a minor reason but a significant one—has to do with Mr. Clinton's handling, during the Presidential primaries, of the issue of extramarital sexual relationships. When he was accused of having had an affair, while governor of Arkansas, with a woman named Gennifer Flowers, his response, in the famous "60 Minutes" appearance, was to suggest—elliptically but unmistakably—that he had been unfaithful in the past, but that that period in his marriage was now behind him.

The advantage of this one-size-fits-all confession was that it permitted voters to decide whether adultery in the abstract was a disqualification for the Presidency. They decided that it was not. The disadvantage, though, is that if there was hanky-panky in the general there must necessarily have been hanky-panky in the specific, and Mr. Clinton's concession left the door open to any woman willing to walk through it and claim the title. It's not a door that can be easily closed.

But that's not the only reason we are condemned to be witnesses to this spectacle. It has become popular to suggest that it's all the fault of Anita Hill, whose accusation of sexual harassment made things difficult for Clarence Thomas during the hearings, three years ago, on his nomination to the Supreme Court. And it's become popular among some conservatives to reproach Hill's supporters for hypocrisy in failing to rally now to the cause of Ms. Jones.

The charge of hypocrisy is largely self-serving. (When Representative Bob Dornan, Republican of California, was asked why, though he had been dismissive of the charges made by Professor Hill, he was suddenly keen to pursue claims of harassment made by Ms. Jones, he explained, "I feel more strongly now that I'm the father of three daughters and grandpa for four granddaughters"—a rapid rate of reproduction indeed, even for a congressman.) Still, despite the obvious, immense differences in motive and credibility between Ms. Jones and Professor Hill, one similarity between their cases is important. After coming forward, both women quickly found themselves engulfed in a political and media maelstrom quite beyond their control, and neither woman's life is likely to be the better for it. Whether they were or were not victims to begin with, they are victims now.

The trouble is that we haven't learned how to handle incidents of sexual indiscretion and misbehavior. This was clear in the case of Gary Hart, who was staked out overnight and then subjected to an astonishing moral inquisition by the press, which finally forced him to withdraw from public life. It was clear in the case of Professor Hill and Judge Thomas, in which the principals were required to conduct their dispute on live national television. It is clear (on a smaller scale) in the cases of male professors who have been disciplined on the strength of charges that they "undressed" female students "with their eyes," or taught material interpreted by some members of their classes as suggestive or demeaning.

These events become circuses without tents: anything goes, and goes for as long as it can be made to. The facts are usually hard to come by; the intentions are impossible to come by. But a frenzy of prurience is whipped up, and, once it is whipped up, it cannot be made to subside: we apparently find this stuff so offensive that we cannot get enough of it. It's the self-replenishing nature of these stories that makes them so useful to political opportunists.

There is probably no institutional fix. The laws against sexual harassment have to remain general enough to chill obnoxious behavior; the press has to investigate, so that the accusations and counter-accusations don't constitute all the known facts in a case; male public figures have to remain answerable to complaints that they are insensitive to women. It would be nice, though, to be able to believe that, after a case has been dealt with, there will be *someone* who does not feel cheapened by the experience. ♦

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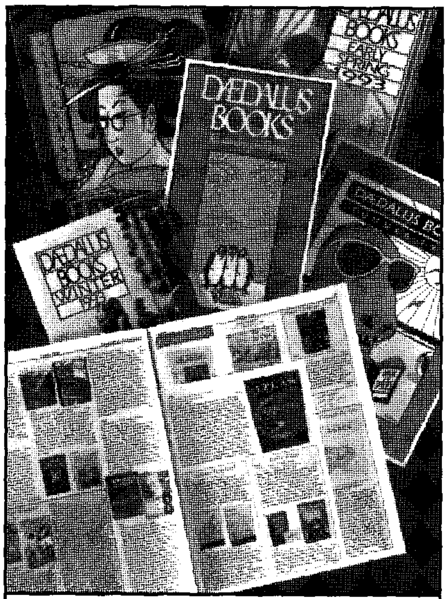

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IN THE MAIL

VOX POPULI

The basic message of your Comment on the general elections in Italy ("Vox Populist," April 18th) was that Silvio Berlusconi bamboozled the poor, naïve Italians into voting for him. There could be other reasons that he was preferred by so many voters who had previously been Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, and Liberals, and were therefore capable of exercising some kind of rational political choice. For example, they could have been tired of the heavy state control of the economy, more extensive than in any other Western country and a palpable burden on the natural inventiveness and enterprise of the people. Americans would not put up with it. No other European country on this side of the former Iron Curtain does. Why should Italians? Berlusconi was the only party leader who went on the hustings and gave a clear commitment to dismantling this ramshackle apparatus and letting free markets reign. It is a message that has won elections all over Europe.

Italians want to have better services and, if it is possible, to pay less in taxes for them. They do not need monopolistic television campaigns to tell them that this is what they want. What they need is a politician who makes some serious effort to do what they want. That is where Berlusconi comes in.

DANIELA COLI
University of Florence

PAOLO BERNARDINI
European University Institute
Florence

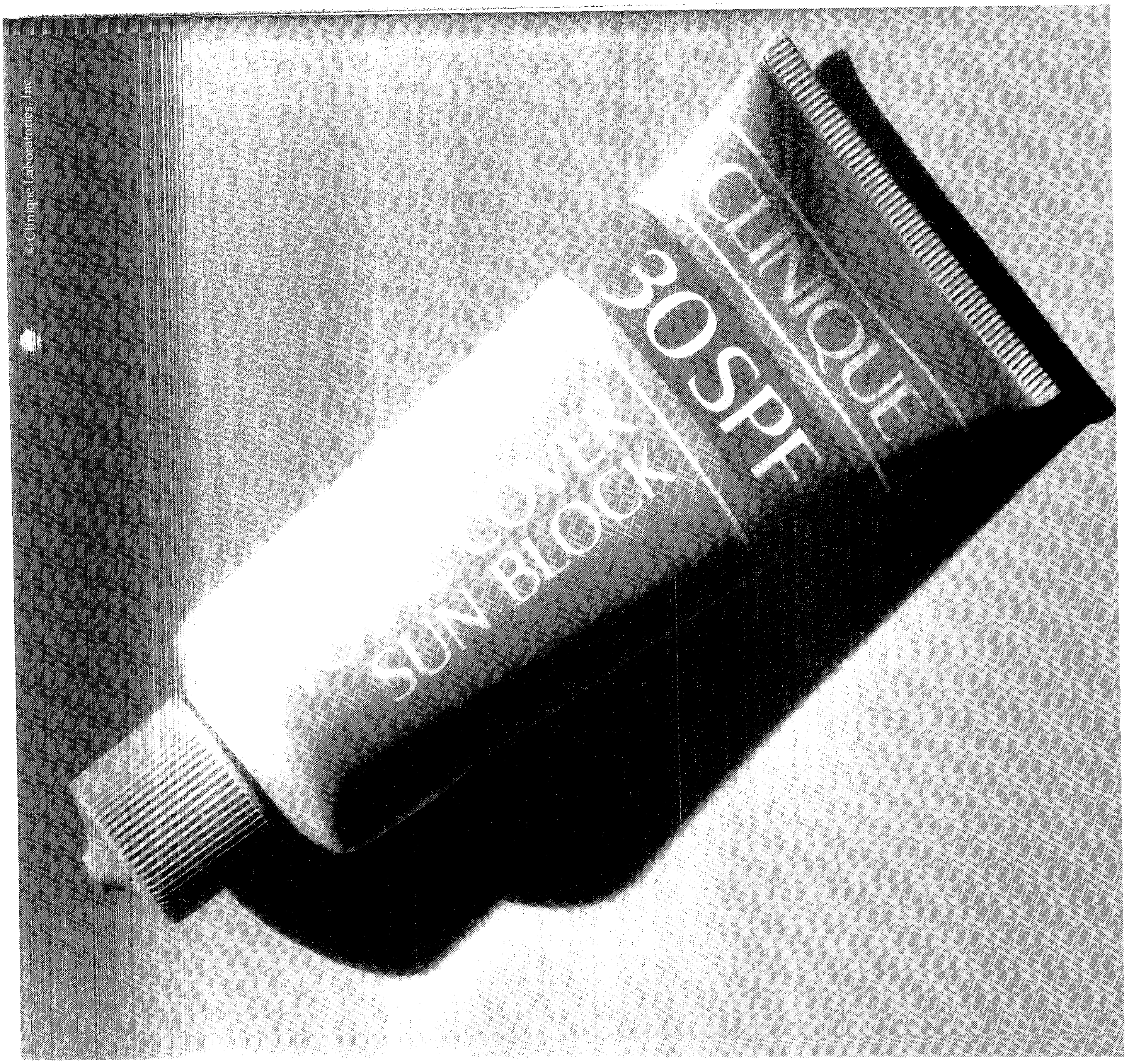
While the union of media and politics would, in all likelihood, be an unholy marriage, such an interpretation of Mr. Berlusconi's strong showing in the recent Italian elections represents a gross misreading of the Italian political landscape. Certainly Mr. Berlusconi's television channels helped him to achieve a wider exposure, but you fail to note that his opponents could avail themselves of the services of the state television, consisting of three channels dutifully run by card-carrying cronies of the major political parties. The very fact that voters found the will to "throw the rascals out" after forty years of almost monopolistic programming is, if anything, a powerful statement about the limits of television.

More important, Mr. Berlusconi's showing is just a facet, and probably not the most interesting one, of a movement that began with the ascent of the Northern League—a political party which has yet to understand what a photo-op is, let alone control the media—and includes the far right of Mr. Fini, another media outcast. It is also worth remembering that Italy's traditional parties, including the left, lost their credibility in the widely covered scandal of Tangentopoli—which uncovered the prevalent bribes-for-contracts relationship between government and business—and that this large-scale indictment of formerly powerful establishment figures got started in Milan, the cradle of the Northern League.

PAOLO DOBRILLA
Annandale, N.J.

That television has made presentation far more important than substance in United States elections has been widely and convincingly argued. That a television monopoly can be abused to subvert elections, as was the case in the recent Italian elections, is a warning sounded in your article. What has unfortunately been generally ignored is that television monopolies can be decisive in the total destruction of a society.

In the former Yugoslavia, it was nation-



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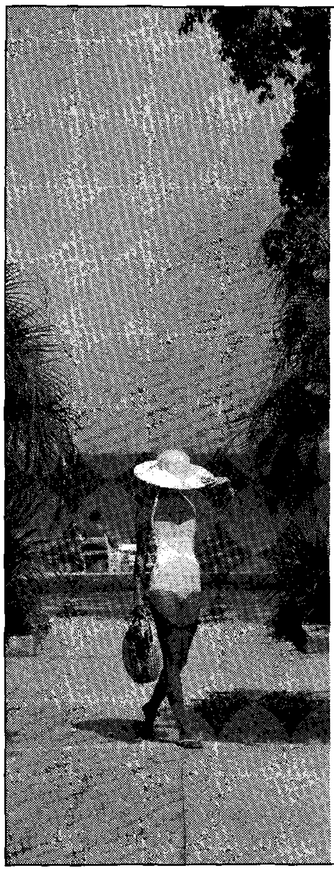

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alist fears intensively promoted by media gangsterism in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia that prepared the ground for the explosion of nationalist hatreds there. Federal Yugoslavia had six media monopolies—one in each republic. When the Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian ones fell under chauvinist control, Yugoslavia's fate was sealed. In addition to the propaganda barrages of distortions and lies mounted by all three television networks, every possible measure was taken to hermetically isolate their respective captive audiences. In the months prior to unilateral secession by Slovenia and Croatia, the one independent Yugoslav news broadcast was forced to retreat from Belgrade to Sarajevo; its reception was blocked in Slovenia and Croatia, and in Serbia it could be aired only after midnight. An independent Yugoslav journalist writing on media gangsterism in the murder of Yugoslavia called television "the cathode of evil."

A dramatic illustration of the impact of television on elections was Serbia's second multiparty election, in December, 1992. In all of former Yugoslavia, only Belgrade, I believe, has a truly independent television channel—and its range barely covers the city itself. In that election, the only anti-war Presidential candidate won overwhelmingly in Belgrade. Just about everywhere else, Slobodan Milošević, the advocate of war and "Greater Serbia," won overwhelmingly.

KAROLINA UDOVICKI
Wheaton, Md.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

The title for Anthony Lane's piece on François Girard's film about Glenn Gould ("The Gould Variations," April 18th) was a good name for the review if you were intending to play on the set of keyboard variations by Bach. But I wonder if the idea of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas, rather than the Goldberg Variations, was behind the title Girard used—"Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould."

THOMAS PUTNAM
Buffalo, N.Y.

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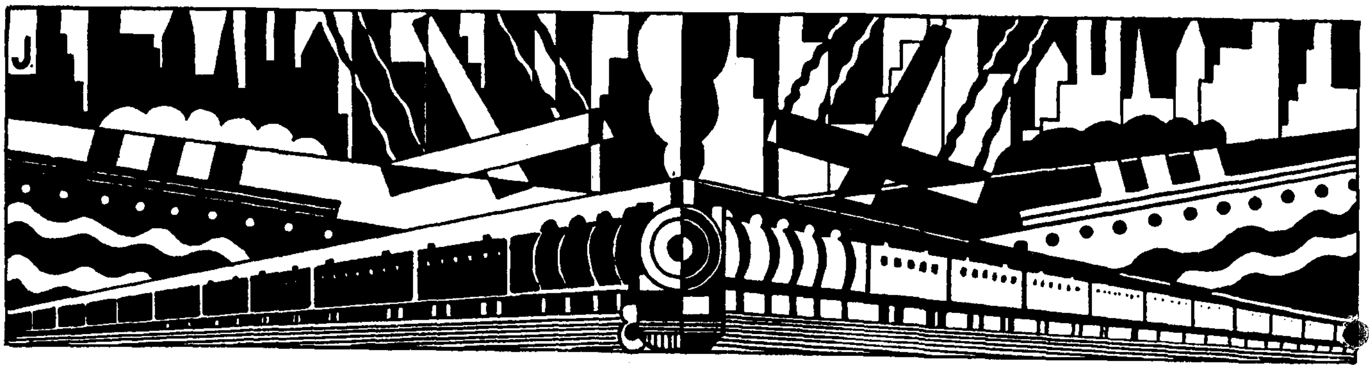

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Mothertalker

To kick off her new show, "Sally Marr . . . and her escorts," Joan Rivers comes barrelling down the side aisle of the Helen Hayes like a runaway pushcart. Comparisons with Mama Rose, who made a similarly brassy entrance in "Gypsy," are invited. Frustrated stage mothers are a show-biz tradition, but Sally Marr, progenitor of the great comedian Lenny Bruce, was a quip above. She had the talent, the drive, the jokes. She had everything except her son's natural timing. Not for Lenny the batta-boom drumroll that finished Sally's one-liners. When he told his mother's most famous joke ("Tonto and the Lone Ranger were homosexuals—you didn't know 'kemo sabe' is the Indian word for Vaseline?"), he didn't need percussive patter. He was already in the groove.

Cool came too late for Lenny's mother. Her pain—or her life—was not inflected with hipster attitude. Miss Rivers, who, with Erin Sanders and Lonny Price, has written what is billed as a play but is really a one-woman show with non-speaking supporting roles, gives us the sources of Sally's *tsuris*, from the bootlegging father to the absent husband to the ungrateful son. Neither the play nor its relentless star asks for sympathy, but both have merits, chief among them the illustration of the standup's lapidary moral: Dying is easy, comedy is hard. Batta boom.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

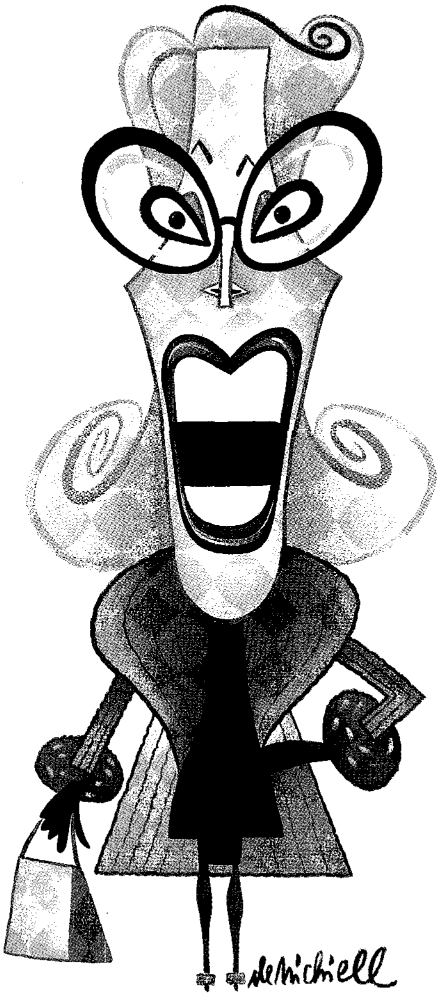
Bring in the Morning—A musical by Gary William Friedman and Herb Schapiro that uses poetry, songs, and stories written by teenagers. Previews through May 22. Opens May 23 at 6:30. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Don Juan in Hell—A staged reading of the play within a play from Shaw's "Man and Superman." With Edward Asner, René Auberjonois, Dianne Wiest, and Harris Yulin. The brief engagement runs from May 19 through May 21. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—A musical comedy written by, and starring, Leslie Jordan. Preview on May 18. Opens May 19 at 8. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

Man Is Man—The Independent Theatre Company's production of Bertolt Brecht's play. Opens May 18 at 8. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

subUrbia—This play by Eric Bogosian concerns some twenty-year-olds hanging out at a 7-Eleven. The cast includes Josh Hamilton, Martha Plimpton, and Steve Zahn. Previews through May 22 at 3. Opens May 22 at 7:30. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)



Joan Rivers in "Sally Marr . . . and her escorts."

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors, especially Robert Stanton and Nancy Opel. Wendy Lawless, Ted Neustadt, and Michael Countryman do their part to keep the proceedings cruising along at top speed. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Amphigorey: A Musicale—Fifteen Edward Gorey stories set to music. With sets by Mr. Gorey, of course, and a score by Peter Golub. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 777-7474. Closes May 28.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, calls itself a musical, but it is really an American cousin of an English pantomime. At its best, "Beauty and the Beast" has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince at the finale. But the director, Robert Jess Roth, rarely rises above the pedestrian. With Susan Egan, Terrence Mann, Tom Bosley, Gary Beach, Heath Lamberts, Burke Moses, and Beth Fowler. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public—Dee Hoty and Scott Holmes co-star in this sequel to "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

Broken Glass—Arthur Miller has found a metaphor for the cycle of blame that seems to have stalemated modern life: the hysterical paralysis of a devoted wife. This short, discursive, but compelling play features strong performances by Amy Irving, Ron Rifkin, David Dukes, and George N. M[illegible]tin. John Tillinger directed. (5/9/94) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Brothers Karamazov—David Fishelson's adaptation of Dostoyevski's novel makes for a long evening, but it's worth it. Presented by Jean Cocteau Repertory. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060. Closes June 3.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

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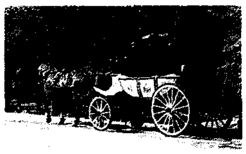

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- *Welcome Back to Brooklyn Festival (6/12)*
- *Restaurant Week (6/13-17)*
- *Queens Festival (6/18-19)*
- *Buskers Fare (6/28-7/4)*
- *Lincoln Center Midsummer Night Swing (6/22-7/23)*
- *Mostly Mozart Festival (July-August)*
- *Free Shakespeare in Central Park (July-August)*
- *Theatre Week (7/11-15)*
- *Harlem Weeks (8/1-8/21)*
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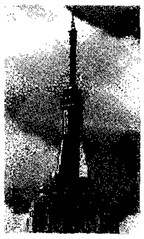

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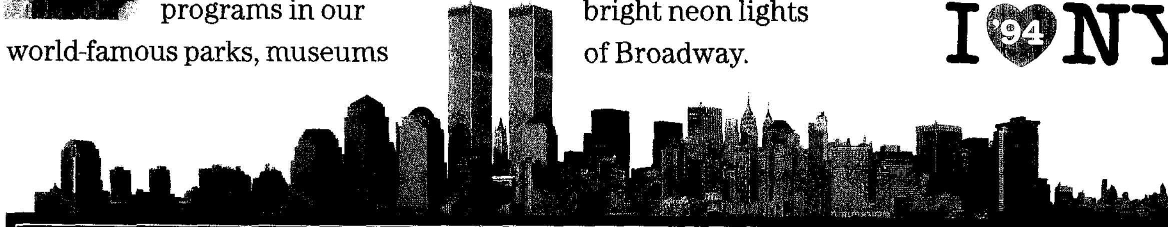

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Christina Alberta's Father—A new musical by Polly Pen, based on a 1925 novel by H. G. Wells. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes May 29.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival, with Victor Garber as the Devil and Bebe Neuwirth as Lola. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). The result is a vehicle that swerves between fifties stodginess and nineties cynicism. But the cast delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The annual marathon of one-act plays continues with Series B: "Rosemary with Ginger," by Edward Allan Baker; "New York Actor," by John Guare; "Mudtracks," by Regina Taylor; "Dear Kenneth Blake," by Jacquelyn Reingold; and "Lunch with Lyn," by Marsha Norman. Through May 29. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. The marathon runs through June 12.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Grease!—Rosie O'Donnell is Rizzo, Ricky Paull Goldin is Danny, and Susan Wood is Sandy in Tommy Tune's production of the 1972 musical by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hide Your Love Away: The Ballad of Brian Epstein—Kevin Scott's play about the Beatles' manager takes place in 1967. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery, seen here in Stephen Daldry's production for the Royal National Theatre, is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, have ideas, not actions, to play. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—A considerably pumped-up version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's first musical, with former soap star Michael Damian in the title role. The Bible was never like this. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. Closes May 29.)

Kindertransport—Dana Ivey has the leading role in a play by Diane Samuels. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Medea—Diana Rigg gives a magnetic performance in this production of Euripides' tragedy, an import from London's Almeida Theatre, under the direction of Jonathan Kent. There's a thrilling electrical charge whenever Rigg is onstage, and grief and horror are also conveyed by Peter J. Davison's powerful, dramatic set. With Tim Oliver Woodward as Jason, Janet Henfrey, John Turner, and Donald Douglas. (4/25/94) (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Medium—Marshall McLuhan's life and writings inspired this multimedia piece, conceived and directed by Anne Bogart. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

Milk and Honey—A revised version of Jerry Herman's 1961 musical. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 29.)

Moe's Lucky Seven—Marlane Meyer's romantic comedy takes place in a bar during a dockworkers' strike. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Moonshot and Cosmos—Two one-acts by Lanford Wilson. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200. Closes May 29.)

Mort Sahl's America—One of the innovative funnymen of the fifties and sixties, Mort Sahl is sharply intelligent but too witty to be vulgar, and this is too bad. His gig is more a series of cocktail-party set pieces than a show, but he performs it with enormous laid-back charm. (4/25/94) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Movieland—In Everett Quinton's latest outing, Mr. Q. plays a character called Ruby Stevens (attention, non-campers: that's Barbara Stanwyck's real name), who frenetically acts out parts in half a dozen old movies, including "The Spiral Staircase," "The Ten Commandments," and "Madame

Major support for the fossil halls has come from the Lila Acheson Wallace/American Museum of Natural History Fund, the Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History,
The City of New York, Exxon Corporation, The Kresge Foundation, and the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation.
Left, *Amphicyon ingens*, bear-dog; right, *Ramoceros osborni*, antelope-like creature. © 1994, American Museum of Natural History

X'' ("the blondest movie ever made"). (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim's new musical, with a book by James Lapine, who also directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Picnic—In William Inge's 1953 play, a man with a past barrels into a small Kansas town on Labor Day, bringing the promise of emotional danger and sex to the women who live there. Scott Ellis's production is set in the thirties, and though the leads, played by Ashley Judd and Kyle Chandler, are disappointing, most of the other actors—including Anne Pitoniak, Polly Holliday, Larry Bryggman, Angela Goethals, Tate Donovan, and that paragon of pizzazz Debra Monk—work beautifully together to call up Inge's poignant small-town world. (5/2/94) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes May 29.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs amazing illusions that strain credulity. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes May 28.)

Sally Marr . . . and her escorts—Joan Rivers stars in a play about the mother of Lenny Bruce. Written by Ms. Rivers, Erin Sanders, and Lonny Price. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Shaker Heights—A comedy by Quincy Long. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes June 5.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. She, Jordan Baker, and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes represent three generations of women trying to sort out their pasts. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show, seen recently at the Public Theatre. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Wilderness—A drama by the Chinese playwright Cao Yu, presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. (Playhouse 46, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 28.)

LONG RUNS

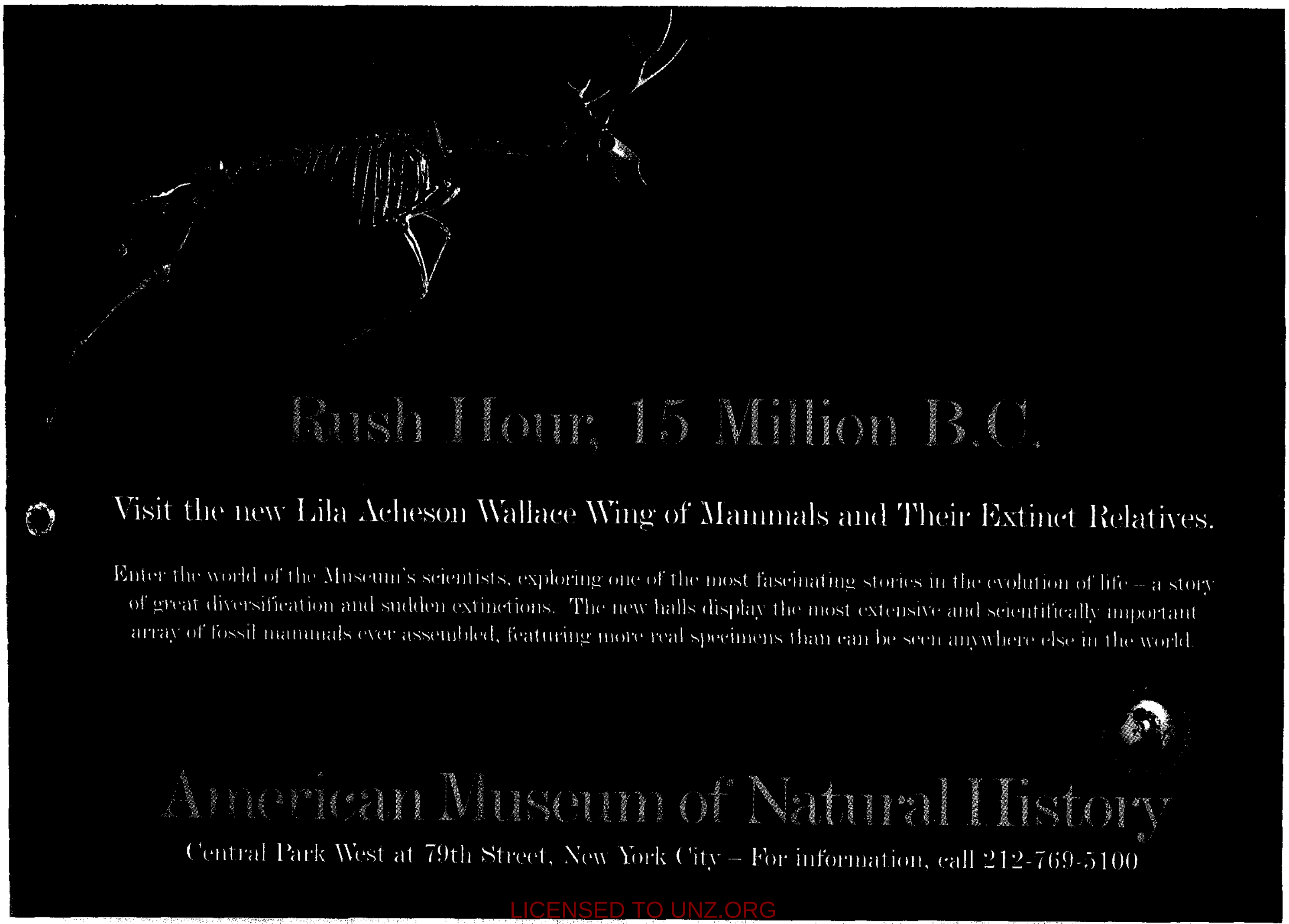
ANGELS IN AMERICA: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—May 18 at 8: The first of the Diamond Project programs, a series presenting neoclassical dance by international choreographers. This one includes premières of pieces by Damian Woetzel ("Ebony Concerto"), Kevin O'Day ("Viola Alone"), Trey McIntyre ("Steel and Rain"), and David Allan ("Pastoral Dances.") . . . ¶ May 19 at 7:30: A Diamond Project program, including pieces by Peter Martins ("Mozart Piano Concerto") and Ulysses Dove ("Red Angels"), as well as "Pastoral Dances." . . . ¶ May 20 at 8: "Fanfare," "Apollo," "Ebony Concerto," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ May 21 at 2: "Songs of the Auvergne," "Andantino," and "Agon." . . . ¶ May 21 at 8: A Diamond Project program, including "Chiaroscuro" by Lynne Taylor-Corbett, "Steel and Rain," "Red Angels," and "Mozart Piano Concerto." . . . ¶ May 22 at 1: "Pastoral Dances," "Agon," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." . . . ¶ May 22 at 7: "Ballo della Regina," "Concertino," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Ives, Songs," and "Symphony in C." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 26.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 18 at 2 and 8 and May 19 at 8: "Manon." . . . ¶ May 20 and May 23 at 8 and May 21 at 2 and 8: "The Nutcracker." . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "Airs," "Echoing of Trumpets," and "Theme and Variations." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 4.)

"Diablo"—A flamenco theatre piece, with José Greco II and other dancers. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 18-20 and May 24 at 8, May 21 at 2 and 8, and May 22 at 2 and 7:30. Through May 29.)



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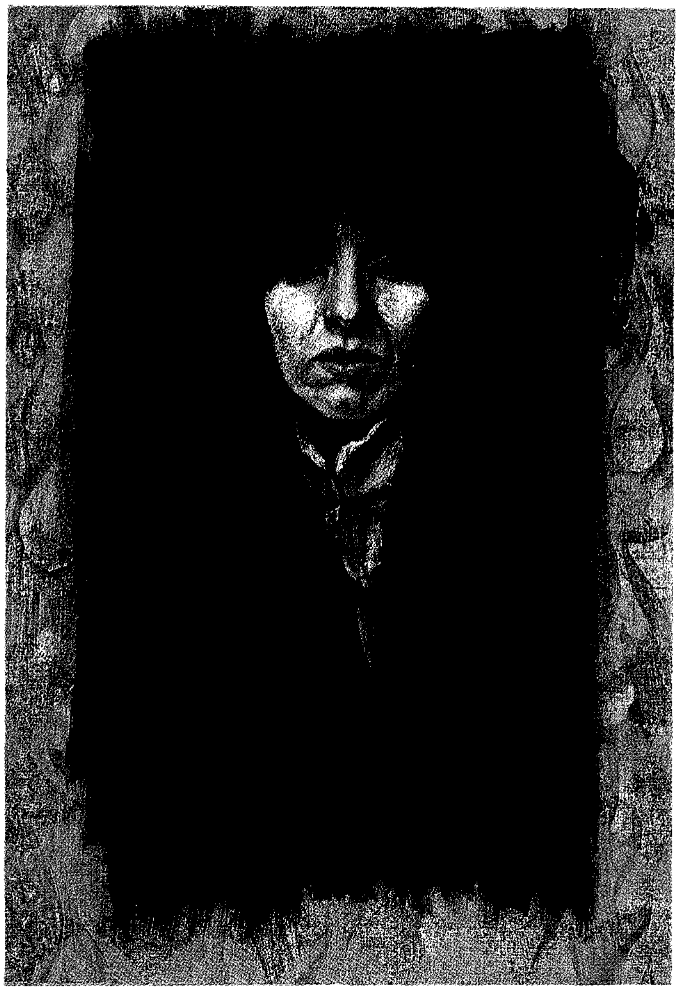
NIGHT LIFE

She-Rocker

In 1980, the Pretenders released their kick-in-the-teeth first album, and Chrissie Hynde became the iconoclastic female rocker par excellence. Virtually every contender in the contemporary women's-rock sweepstakes, from Liz Phair to Courtney Love, has cited the British band's American-born singer and guitarist as a key influence. Still, for someone who's been so extensively celebrated as a feminist role model, Hynde can offer some unlikely sound bites. "I'm not interested in women," the great Pretender told us. "I'm interested in people. I don't prefer women or men. I mean, sexually I prefer men. In fact, sexually I only like men." Musically Hynde likes men, too. "They're simple," she says. "Their small minds adjust to just one focussed subject—they plug in, they do the job. Men can rock." She added, "I can out-rock almost any guy. But that might be biological—too much testosterone in my mother's sixth month, or something."

Hynde has, in fact, worn the pants in the Pretenders throughout the group's career. Despite personnel tragedy—guitarist James Honeyman Scott died of a drug overdose in 1982, and bassist Pete Farndon met the same fate the following year—the band forged ahead, under Hynde's direction, with a classic album in 1983, "Learning to Crawl," and lost little momentum with "Get Close," in 1986. After that, the group's other remaining original member, drummer Martin Chambers, dropped out. The next seven years brought only one Pretenders studio project, the subpar "Packed!" in 1990.

Now, at last, the Pretenders are back with a vengeance—and with Chambers once again on drums. Their new album, "Last of the Independents," combines pop mastery with a sense of hard-won authority. The band will perform its new material at Irving Plaza on May 24 and at the Academy on May 26, as part of a national tour of smaller venues. Hynde left "the apples of my eye"—her two daughters, aged nine and eleven—behind in England to do this tour. "The girls are old enough now where I can say, 'Look, I'll be back. The old lady's gotta get onstage and do her thing,'" she says. "I can't stop myself."



Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders.

JARRETT HUDDLESTON

CONCERTS

Bryan Adams—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3000. May 18 at 7:30.

Jazz Composers Collective—Presenting pianist Bill Mays and saxophonist John Schroeder. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. May 18 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Musical Traditions of Crown Heights: Singing the Gospel—Lillie Butler, the Reverend Robert Butler, and Toshi Reagon. (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. May 19 at 7. For information about tickets, call 1-718 624-0890.)

Lionel Hampton—With his orchestra, in a tribute to Dizzy Gillespie. Bill Cosby is the evening's host. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 20 at 8.)

Arlo Guthrie—In a benefit concert. The band Xavier (led by Arlo's son Abe, a third-generation Guthrie) is also on the bill. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 20 at 8.)

Bruce Cockburn—With Patty Larkin. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 20 at 8.)

GospelFest 1994—Local groups compete in three categories—choir, ensemble, and youth—in the semifinals of a contest that will culminate in a concert at Avery Fisher Hall on June 10. (First Corinthian Baptist Church, Seventh Ave. at 116th St. May 21 at noon and 7. No tickets necessary.)

Steel Pan Music—Performed by the C.A.S.Y.M. Steel Orchestra. (Gershwin Hall, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-5792. May 21 at 8.)

Julio Sabala—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 21 at 8.

Cris Williamson and Tret Fure—With comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 21 at 8.)

"Folksongs Plus"—Tom Paxton, the Chad Mitchell trio, Tom Chapin, Christine Lavin, Eric Weissberg & the New Blue Velvet Band, and Peter, Paul & Mary. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 23 at 8.)

JAZZ AND BLUES

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (7492228)—On May 20-21: the BENNY POWELL quartet. Trombonists bred in big bands the way Powell was aren't to be taken lightly. Having come up with Count Basie, Powell knows the value of clarity and the majestic force of the blues. JUDI SILVANO is in with a trio on May 24. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. TANIA MARIA continues through May 22. R. & B. diva PHYLLIS HYMAN begins a weeklong engagement on May 24. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Guitarist KEVIN EUBANKS appears on May 19-21. Eubanks has a high-profile gig with the "Tonight Show" orchestra. Bassist Robert Hurst, a Leno bandmate, and pianist James Williams will accompany him for this non-televised appearance. On May 22, CHRIS ANDERSON and RAY DRUMMOND join forces. Though only a handful of recordings dot Anderson's forty-year career, and his appearances have at best been sporadic, the pianist still safely qualifies as a legend; lyrical and eccentric, his bop runs have the unmistakable power of authenticity. Drummond, a formidable bass player, will serve as his foil. Dining.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Thursday nights belong to GIANT STEP, a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. MEDESKI, MARTIN, & WOOD appear on May 20. This trio (two of whom are members of the Lounge Lizards) plays churning bebop, driven by the tortured sounds of John Medeski's Hammond organ. Sonic Youth guitarist THURSTON MOORE drops in on May 21.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—CHRIS CONNOR sings on May 19-22. Fondly remembered from her days with Stan Kenton, Connor can still find the calming corners of a ballad and give standards a gentle, insistent swing. The AL GREY sextet starts on May 24. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor LES PAUL leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The MINGUS BIG BAND packs them in every Thursday; Mondays belong to GUITARS PLAY MINGUS. The five harmonized guitarists featured in this program include Larry Coryell, Jack Wilkins, and Peter Leitch, so expect plenty of fancy fretwork. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features excellent Continental food, a handsome bar upstairs, and a Dr. Caligari-meets-the-Flintstones-on-LSD performance space downstairs. May 19-21: SANTI DEBRIANO'S PANAMANIACS. May 24: A quartet belonging to SCOTT FEINER.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The BILL FRISELL band drops in on May 20-21. May 23: The CHARLES GAYLE trio.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great GENE BERTONCINI lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Ignore the menu, order something from the bar, and wait till the lights go down for VERNEL BAGNERIS, whose tribute to Jelly Roll Morton is a treat. There may be a tad too much talk, but Bagneris is a captivating performer. An expansion of last year's "Jelly Roll: A Memorial," this is a more substantial show, highlighted by the rapport between Bagneris and pianist **MORTEN GUNNAR LARSEN.** On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. Closed Sundays.

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—The basement of this swank café is now hosting a series of high-profile gigs. The **ALLAN HARRIS** quartet and **LONNIE LEIBOWITZ** are here on May 20-21.

NITE CAFÉ, 108 W. 18th St. (924-4222)—This brand-new club and restaurant was bound to happen. Built in a restored turn-of-the-century town house, it combines a Victorian opulence, borrowed from the recent rash of based-on-the-book films, with a hint of the First Couple's taste in interior decoration. Claret-colored walls, heavy swags of dark velvet, overstuffed lounge chairs, and pink deep-buttoned sofas provide a perfect setting for lounging in the name of nostalgia. The musical fare includes jazz and dance-music sets offered by hipper-than-thou d.j.s.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—May 18-19: Jamaican dub poet and Lollapalooza alum **MUTABARUKA,** with reggae artist **SISTER CAROL.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An electrified big band belonging to **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Saxophonist **KENNY GARRETT** performs through May 22. Garrett's high-visibility slot in Miles Davis's late-eighties bands didn't reveal everything he's capable of doing. Having earlier been schooled in two leading swing academies—the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and Freddie Hubbard's band—Garrett now makes soaring excursions into the modal/bop stratosphere. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Beginning May 24: **JIMMY SCOTT.** Scott has dropped the "little" that used to front his name, and with good reason: there's nothing diminutive about the talent of this fine singer. With his quirky way of looking from one side of the room to the other, he seems to be conducting a discussion. He's always in control musically, too; even on songs you've heard dozens of times before, he makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **CRAIG HANDY** quartet continues through May 22. One of New York's most in-demand saxophonists, Handy has shown astonishing musical growth over the past few years. His measured, assured playing still clearly betrays his influences: Sonny Rollins, Lester Young, and Dexter Gordon. On May 23, the Vanguard's own sixteen-piece orchestra embarks on a weeklong celebration of its twenty-eighth anniversary.

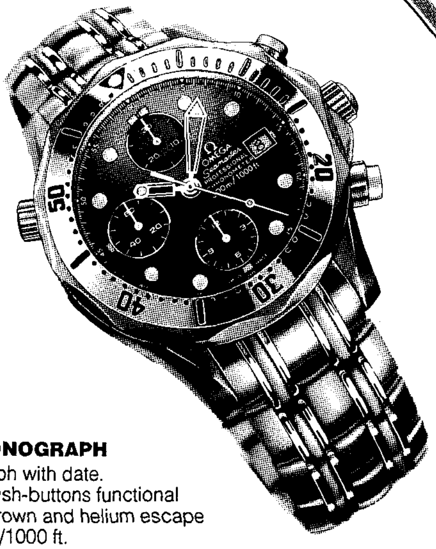
ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian and the musicians are first-rate. This week, you can check out two distinguished piano-bass pairings. **HAROLD MABERN** and **JAMIL NASSER** continue through May 21, then **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and **SANTI DEBRIANO** begin on May 23.

ZANZIBAR, 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-[illegible]755)—Drummer **BOB MOSES** arrives with his Hip Life Hoptet on May 19. May 20: The **PETE LEVIN** organ trio, featuring **ANTON FIG** and the perpetually barefoot **HIRAM BULLOCK.** Dining.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Midway through her spring fling in that woody nook known as the Oak Room, **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** has embarked on an Irving Berlin tribute, mixing some rarely heard early pieces with classics like "Cheek to Cheek" and "Say It Isn't So." Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—Chanteur **MICHEL HERMON** and accordionist **GÉRARD BARREAUX** continue with their Piaf-inspired program this week. Cabaret legend **BLOSSOM**



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TRAVEL GUIDE

VIRGINIA

NIGHT LIFE-Cont'd

DEARIE presents an early show (6:30) on Friday and Saturday evenings. Wednesdays and Thurdays belong to singer **JOHN WALLOWITCH**.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The fabulous **BOBBY SHORT** is currently appearing. *Time has not diminished the* tasteful virtuosity of Short's ivory-tickling; nor has it deflated his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. Now in his twenty-seventh year at the Carlyle, Short continues to give the royal treatment to gems by Gershwin, Ellington, Arlen, Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN** continues through May 28. Her show, called "An Affair to Remember: Movie Music from the Fabulous Fifties," recalls a time, according to the velvet-voiced chanteuse, "when the whole world was younger and stupider." A graceful performer and delightfully intelligent raconteur, Haran has enough torch to start a four-alarm fire. With Bill Charlap on piano, David Finck on bass, and Dave Ratajczak on drums. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. May 22: Singer **ELLEN KAYE** appears. Dining.

ROCK AND FOLK

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—**MATTHEW SWEET** arrives on May 21. Sweet's most recent album, "Altered Beast," isn't quite the box of folk-rock candy that his 1991 release, "Girlfriend," was, but his new rawness is an interesting development. When he hits the bull's-eye, as he does with a great song like "Someone to Pull the Trigger," this rocker can make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. For concert information, call 249-8870.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—May 20: Irish folk music with Bronx-born singer **JOANIE MADDEN.**

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Rock goddess **DARLENE LOVE** continues her Tuesday-night stand. May 18: Yet another installment of Vin Scelsa's "A Bunch of Songwriters Sittin' Around Singing." This program features **ROGER MC GUINN, PETE SEEGER, TED HAWKINS,** and **JOE SOUTH.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—On May 19: the **KNACK.** These New Wave relics are back, thanks to whoever included their power-punk chestnut "My Sharona" on the "Reality Bites" soundtrack.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—On May 18, catch **COLLECTIVE SOUL.** Soul's front man, Ed Rollins, has been a struggling songwriter for over a decade, so the success of his blues-rock band's first single, the breezily ingratiating "Shine" (a hot college-radio track that recently entered the *Billboard* pop charts), must seem especially sweet. May 19: The smoking funk-rock outfit **24-7 SPYZ** reunites.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**DEBORAH HARRY** is here on May 18. Best known as the New Wave pinup who sang Blondie's sugar-shock pop songs in the late seventies and early eighties, Harry has been a solo artist for over a decade now. Although her recording career has been sporadic, and it hasn't yielded great commercial success, Harry still has an ethereal voice and an unpredictable taste for urban dance sounds. On May 19-20, **BUDDY GUY,** the living blues-guitar legend, will be taping his first live LP in over two decades. Backing up Guy and making faces will be G.E. Smith, with his "Saturday Night Live" band in tow. Guy's recent collaborator Johnnie Johnson, who has played piano with Chuck Berry since the early sixties, will also join him for this gig. The **PRETENDERS** make a not-to-be-missed appearance on May 24. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, from eight until midnight. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. For information, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—On May 24: The pile-driving machine-metal band **KMFDM** headlines the Angstfest, an evening of punishingly industrial dance music for the young and restless. **SISTER MACHINE GUN** and **CHEMLAB** are also on the bill.

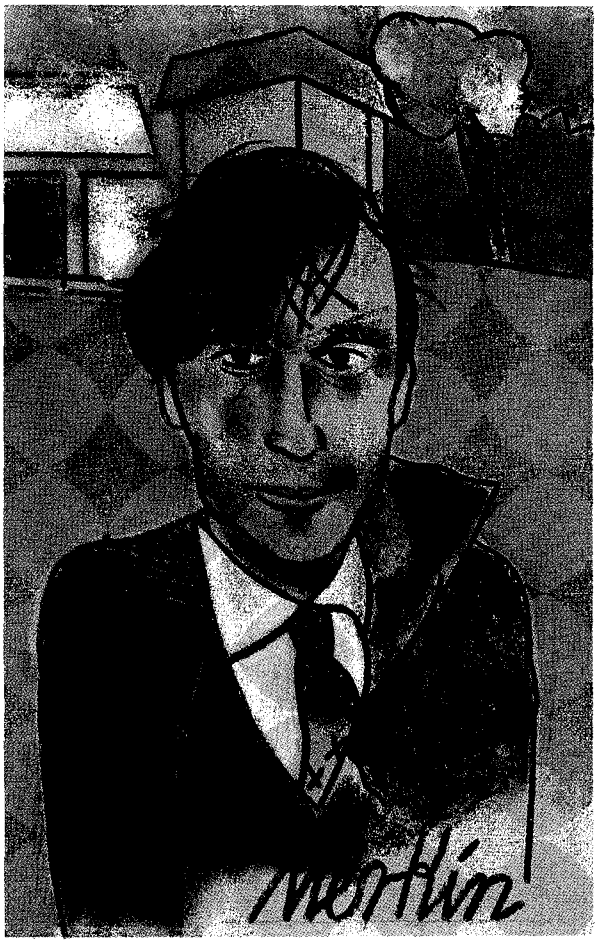
Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. May 19: **SAVOY BROWN,** with **KIM SIMMONDS.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A Hoboken landmark, and a hotbed for alternative upstarts. The **COCKTAILS** are here on May 21, followed by **LUNGFISH** on May 22.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**MAZZY STAR** appears on May 21 and May 24.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**OTIS RUSH** brings his soulful voice and groovy guitar to the club on May 20, with guest **DIANE SCANLON.** . . . ¶ Next door, at Tramps Café, Zydeco great **TERRANCE SIMIEN** performs on May 20. May 21: An evening of blues with the **KINSEY REPORT.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. **VENUS FOR BREAKFAST** stops by on May 19, with Feel. On May 20, you can catch the **AUTHORITY,** with guests Yolk.



Duncan Hannah at the Beitzel gallery in SoHo.

ART

Where We Are

LOUISE BOURGEOIS has long been a subterranean force in contemporary art, but in the last decade, since her 1982 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, that force has intensified to the point where it feels inevitable. Her haunted and often intensely theatrical sculptural investigations of memory, dread, and desire as key works in the current artistic climate, with its subjective, body-oriented versions of Surrealism and Expressionism. Now the Brooklyn Museum has mounted "Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works 1982–1993," an expanded version of the show it organized for the United States Pavilion of the 1993 Venice Biennale. The show is valuable both for its presentation of Bourgeois and for its insight into the sensibility of the moment.

"People misunderstand my work," Bourgeois has complained. "I am not a Surrealist: I am an existentialist." The artist no doubt has her reasons for placing herself in opposition to the male-dominated and often misogynist poetics of Surrealism, seeking in existentialism a more profound approach to the human condition. Yet there can be no doubt that the formal and psychological underpinnings of her work are in Surrealism. Indeed, sculptures like "Blind Man's Buff" (1984), with its mound of breastlike marble protuberances, or the fingerlike phalli of "Untitled (with Growth)" (1989) are among the most effective exploitations of Surrealist biomorphic forms in recent art. Bourgeois remains faithful to a few implacable themes, all of which ultimately lead back to the child's primordial response to sexuality.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The roof garden, complete with sculptures, is open through the end of October. . . . ¶ Masterpieces from the museum's furniture collection, including a Mies van der Rohe tubular steel armchair. . . . ¶ "American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915." John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt are included in *the first major exhibition to pair these* turn-of-the-century schools of painting and to focus on their similarities. . . . ¶ A companion exhibit to the above, "American Impressionism and Realism: Drawings, Prints, and Photographs" features work from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ "Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges." The Flemish painter Petrus Christus was long thought to be little more than a competent pupil of Jan van Eyck, but modern scholarship has reconstructed a career of the first rank. This exhibit contains twenty-seven works, three-quarters of Petrus's known œuvre. . . . ¶ "Divine Protection: Batak Art of North Sumatra." Seventy primarily wooden works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ranging from a three-inch-square ritual book to staffs and puppets. . . . ¶ Eighteen new permanent galleries devoted to the art of South and Southeast Asia have recently opened. Ancient India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia, among other nations and cultures, are represented. . . . ¶ "Waist Not," a Costume Institute exhibit, proposes the waist as the defining element of the fashion silhouette, offering examples from the eighteenth century to the present. A Jane Fonda exercise tape provides the audio. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

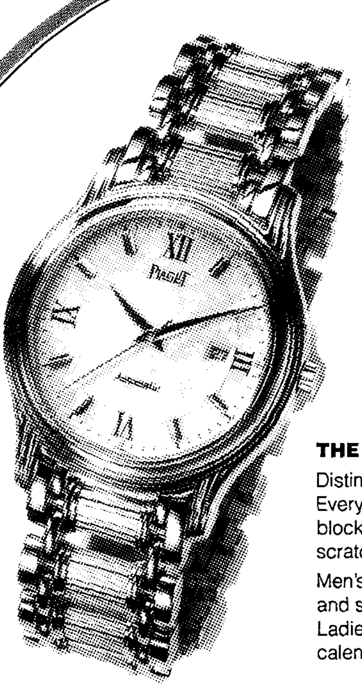
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"American Surrealist Photography" offers a heterogeneous assortment of forty-nine photographs from the permanent collection, some of which seem to have been smuggled in from outside the supposed theme. The truly surreal images—such as a 1933 photograph by James Thrall Soby depicting a female nude that turns out to be made of stone—really get to the heart of the matter. . . . ¶ The second in a two-part series of drawings by modern (1959-91) artists, both American and European. Marcel Broodthaers and Jasper Johns are included. Through June 14. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Tradition of the New: Post-War Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection." Opens May 20. . . . ¶ "Women on the Edge: Twenty Photographers in Europe, 1919-39" provides an antidote to the many historical surveys that have overlooked women who contributed to this fertile, influential period in European photography. Through June 1. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Rolywholyover A Circus." John Cage (1912-92) took his title from Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" and used, among other things, a computerized version of the "I Ching" to create a circus. Cage said, "The basic idea is that the exhibition would change so much that if you came back a second time, you wouldn't recognize it." It includes a rotating exhibit of work by fifty artists, including Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell; *enso* scrolls; an interactive computer installation; an object each from the permanent collections of several New York museums; and a media room with a program that is always changing. For schedule information, call 423-3836. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist. . . . ¶ "Ideas and Objects: Selected Drawings and Sculptures from the Permanent Collection." Sculptures by fifteen artists, coupled with drawings that relate to the finished works. . . . ¶ A lobby exhibit of Isamu Noguchi's early abstract sculptures and drawings. Through June 19. . . . ¶ "Richard Avedon: Evidence 1944-94." A retrospective that includes the photographer's early unpublished work for *Life*, fashion shots for *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, several signature formal portraits, and a series of pictures done in the East Louisiana State Hospital, in February, 1963. Though the show has a decidedly informal air (there's no glass over the pictures, and several are just tacked to the wall or inside aluminum frames), its momentousness is underscored by the large scale of the photographs. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—The Lila Acheson Wallace Wing of Mammals and Their Extinct Relatives has opened. The museum's



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ART—Cont'd

extensive collection of mammalian fossils has been organized according to evolutionary history, beginning three hundred million years ago. One can see, among other things, the family resemblance of humans and bats. Seven murals by Charles R. Knight, three of which have been recently restored, flesh out the bones, providing full-color pictures of how some prehistoric creatures might have looked. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works *1982-1993.*" . . . ¶ Selected works of Leon Polk Smith, an American abstract painter. . . . ¶ "Fantasy Furniture," an installation of fourteen pieces, mostly from the nineteenth century. . . . ¶ Red Grooms' large-scale sculpture of the Staten Island Ferry arriving in Manhattan graces the museum's lobby. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Glasswork is featured in a retrospective of work by the Finnish artist and designer Timo Sarpaneva. The show also includes pieces in fibre, wood, metal, and porcelain. Through June 18. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian-American Art." The society's first exhibit of contemporary art includes paintings, sculptures, and photographs by twenty Asian-American artists. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Beyond the Borders: Art by Recent Immigrants" features thirty artists from more than twenty countries. Through June 12. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St.—The hundred-and-thirty-fifth annual student art and architecture exhibition features more than a thousand works, including drawing, painting, sculpture, calligraphy, architectural models, and photography. Opens May 23. (Open Mondays through Fridays, noon to 7; Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—Irish artist James Coleman's new project, which involves slides and audiotapes, will be shown along with the first installment of a three-part retrospective of his work. . . . ¶ Work by Katharina Fritsch and Ann Hamilton (through June 19), and by Dan Graham. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6. Closes for the summer on June 19.) . . . ¶ At 393 West Broadway—Walter De Maria's "The Broken Kilometer." . . . ¶ At 141 Wooster St.—De Maria's "The New York Earth Room." (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6. Closes for the summer on June 18.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance." Gold, silver, bronze, and lead depictions of Lorenzo de' Medici and Dürer, among others. Opens May 24. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Japan: A Cartographic Vision, European Printed Maps from the Early Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century." Some hundred and fifty maps and related material documenting European exploration and cartographers' renderings of the mysterious East. On one of the earliest maps, from 1528, Japan is unknown—scary and disproportionately large. The most recent is an 1852 map of the Ryukyu Islands by Philipp Franz von Siebold, a German doctor who was banished from Japan when he attempted to take secret maps back to Europe. Through May 22. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Postcolonial Kinderhood." A bedroom installation by Elaine Reicheck, featuring twelve samplers embroidered with quotations about Jewish identity. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts." Selections include a tenth-century Gospel and items dating from the Armenian diaspora of the eighteenth century. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Municipal Arts Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St.—Eight plans for Van Voorhees Park, which is in danger of becoming a hospital parking lot. The plight of the park, situated along Brooklyn's waterfront, has inspired landscape architects to offer alternative visions of its future. Through June 11. (Open daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Western Artists/African Art." African objects, exhibited along with photographs of the works as usually displayed by the Western artists who own them. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"New York Beauties: Quilts from the Empire State." For the museum's New York Quilt Project, Quilt Days were held in various counties to locate, document, and preserve quilts. Of the approximately six thousand examples obtained, twenty-two are on view, the most flamboyant of which is Elizabeth Hamilton's one-of-a-kind Teaching Quilt (1934). Animals, tools, fruits and vegetables, and the like, all in bright red, are stitched topsy-turvy on a white ground, with a boy and girl on a seesaw in the center and a border of letters and words. Elementary but pleasing. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"His Honor, the Mayor." Boss Tweed, Jimmy Walker, Fiorello LaGuardia, and Ed Koch are among the hundred and six former mayors represented in a salute to New York City government (and attempts at government) over the past three hundred and thirty years. Through May 22. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Glancing Backward: Edith Wharton's New York." Paintings, drawings, sculpture, and books that detail the literary career of Edith Wharton. Opens May 18. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Huang Yong Ping: Chinese Hand Laundry and Chen Zhen: Field of Waste." Two installations for which the artists have divided the gallery into both shared space and individual territory, positioning their work according to the principles of Chinese chess. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Tracking the West: A. J. Russell Photographs of the Union Pacific Railroad" features work from the eighteen-sixties by Union Pacific's official photographer. Maps and illustrated books will also be on view. Through June 18. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Out in Public: Post-Stonewall Performance and Protest." Plays, cabarets, operas, and songs that chronicle gay perspectives in theatre and the performance elements of protest. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"The 25th Anniversary Exhibition: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection, Part II." Works on paper. Opens May 22. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Childe Hassam (1859-1935)—Twenty-eight paintings by the Impressionist, drawn from public and private collections. Opens May 20. Through July 1. (Jordan-Volpe, 958 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Donald Lipski—Wall works of found objects, exhibited in combination with individual sculptures. Opens May 19. Through June 26. (Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Mathew Weaver—Small, bright-colored paintings. Opens May 21. Through July [illegible] (Engelhorn, 470 Broome St.)

"Lest We Forget: On Nostalgia"—A show examining how nostalgia is interpreted by both Eastern and Western artists, among them Christian Boltanski and Annette Messager. (Takashimaya, 693 Fifth Ave., at 54th St. Open Mondays.)

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Pat Adams—Recent paintings, cutouts, and monotypes reflect the artist's fascination with "perennial forms" and megalithic engravings (she recently travelled to Brittany to study the Gavrinis Tumulus). With her sensuous use of materials and elements of geometry, she conjures both the physical and the metaphysical universe. A stony-textured gray egg floats on a field the color of red clay; solid black spheres reverberate on a fiery black-and-red ground; circular forms merge in space like zygotes. Through May 28. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Eric Avery and David Schorr—A duo exhibition. Avery's installation addresses the experience of being H.I.V.-positive; Schorr's cycle of paintings, works on paper, and a book deals with those who have died of AIDS and those who mourn. Through June 11. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St.)

András Böröcz—Figurative sculptures carved from pencils—yes, pencils—by a Hungarian-born artist in his New York début. Through June 11. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

John Cage (1912-92)—"The First Meeting of the Satie Society," an installation and collaborative project devoted to Erik Satie and Marcel Duchamp. Cage wrote a mesostich (a poetic composition that can be read from side to side and from top to bottom), which was subsequently illustrated by Jasper Johns, Robert Ryman, Sol LeWitt, and others. (A concurrent Cage show is at the Guggenheim SoHo.) Through July 3. (Sheehan, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Anthony Caro—An exhibition celebrating this British sculptor's seventieth birthday. These recent works, particularly the larger ones, show Caro as an artist still in full possession of his own distinctive idiom. Through May 27. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Richard Dadd (1817-86)—This artist's first show in America includes paintings and watercolors of fantasy figures and landscapes, and a series on the passions. Through June 3. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)—Paintings and drawings, mostly from the late period of this great exponent of *pittura metafisica* and forerunner of Surrealism. Through May 28. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

Alberto Giacometti (1901-66)—Sculptures and drawings from the artist's formative years in Paris (1922-30). Through June 11. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

Robert Graham—A cluster of patinated or oil-painted bronze statues of female nudes. Despite their relatively small size, these figures have a heroic aspect. Through June 4. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Cheryl Laemmle—Recent autobiographical paintings. Through June 3. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Norman Lundin—Austere paintings of the artist's studio, devoid of everything but the occasional jar, lampshade, or blank canvas tacked to the wall. You want to say, "Anybody home?" Through May 27. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Tullio Pericoli—Fifty drawings, including portraits. Through June 3. (Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo, 24 W. 12th St.)

Saul Steinberg—A group of drawings in which Steinberg considers his role as artist. Through June 11. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Michael Tetherow—Delicately colored totemic paintings. Through June 17. (McCory, 41 E. 57th St.)

Wayne Thiebaud—A mini-survey, including paintings of the artist's familiar edible subjects, such as ice cream and lollipops, as well as more recent San Francisco cityscapes. Through June 30. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Roxie Munro—"Manhattan Paintings." Opens May 19. Through June 30. (Ingbar, 568 Broadway.)

Beverly Semmes—Sculptures of clothing. Opens May 20. Through June 30. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

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Robert Gober—A spare installation of sculptures by a leading *nouveau surréaliste.* The most striking work here features a beeswax model of a male torso lying in an artificial gutter under a grate in the gallery floor. Water streams over the figure and down into a metal drain planted in its sternum. Altogether, it suggests the scene of a crime. Through June 4. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Duncan Hannah—Oil paintings depicting nostalgic scenes of England and France. The time seems to be the twenties or thirties, and the settings are the haunts of gilded Eton and Oxford youths. Through June 4. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Liz Larner—An installation of cast-pewter hands suspended from the ceiling, by a young California artist. Larner has cast the sculptures from preëxisting sculptures of hands, from her own hands, and from models she made of hands. All these disembodied hands floating in space make for a pretty creepy mise en scène. Through June 4. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Dennis Adams—A body of sculptures titled "Trans/Actions." Through July 1. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

Grimanesa Amoros—Paintings of anthropomorphic figures. Through May 30. (Roy, 46 Greene St.)

Elise Asher—Paintings with figurative imagery, based on the artist's poetry. Through May 31. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

Ross Bleckner—Paintings concerned with the effects of light; some are abstract and others contain such imagery as urns, birds, and clouds. Through June 25. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Sandro Chia—Paintings of large figures. Through June 18. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

George Condo—Surrealist paintings with mathematically based compositions. Through June 11. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Beauford Delaney (1901-79)—Paintings done in New York from 1929 to 1953. Through May 28. (Briet, 558 Broadway.)

Byron Dobell—A show consisting mostly of landscapes and seascapes of Ireland. Through May 28. (Atlantic, 475 Broome St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

BILL BRANDT

Eileen Doman—Figurative paintings based on family photographs. Through June 25. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Marlene Dumas—Portraits and figurative paintings by a South African artist living in Amsterdam. Through June 18. (Tilton, 49 Greene St.)

Sylvie Fleury—Mixed-medium works by a Swiss artist. Through June 4. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

April Gornik—Charcoal and black pastel landscape drawings. Through June 18. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Michael Heizer—The inaugural show at a new gallery, featuring granite megaliths embedded in the walls and floor. Through June 30. (Ace, 275 Hudson, at Spring St.)

Jenny Holzer—An installation that features a leather-covered hut embossed with texts, based on the artist's reaction to crimes against women. Through June 30. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Bill Brandt's 1965 portrait of Giorgio de Chirico, whose work is on view at Baldacci.

Guillermo Kuitca—"The Tablada Suite," a series of ten paintings containing imagery based on architectural plans for hospitals, cemeteries, and prisons. Through June 11. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Keith Sonnier—Two viewer-interactive wall reliefs, plus screen prints. Through June 30. (Senior, 375 West Broadway.)

Tony Tasset / Cannon Hudson—Conceptual sculptures, photographs, and videos. / Abstract figurative paintings. Through May 28. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

Grace Bakst Wapner—Sculptures of abstract paired figures. Through June 11. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Rémy Zaugg—Paintings of English text by a Swiss artist. Through June 18. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

"Pier Show 2"—Work by more than a hundred artists, exhibited in a Civil War-era warehouse. (Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, 141 Beard St. Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6, through May 29.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

P.S. 41—Denise Bethel, a Sotheby's auctioneer, will conduct a benefit sale of works by such well-known artists as Donald Baechler, Christo, Larry Rivers, and William Wegman, as well as by emerging artists. (Loeb Student Center, New York University, 566 LaGuardia Pl. Preview May 20, from 6 to 7:30, followed by the auction at 8. For further information, call 741-1099.)

Arts and Crafts To Go—This weekend, the Metropolitan Arts & Antiques Pavilion will be chockablock with antique furniture, pottery, etc., from the Arts and Crafts period. (110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. May 21, from 11 to 6, and May 22, from 11 to 5.)

Art and Artists for Sale—Performance artist Carmelita Tropicana will serve as auctioneer at a sale of objects, unusual services, and art works donated by artists and performers, including Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, Harvey Fierstein, and Lily Tomlin. Proceeds will benefit the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. For further information, call 529-8021. Preview May 23 at 6, followed by the auction at 7:30.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

William Abranowicz—Forty delicately lit black-and-white prints. Through June 4. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Mariana Cook—Photographs of fathers and their daughters, by a student of Ansel Adams. Through June 25. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

Emmet Gowin—Images of the Czech Republic and the American West. Through June 4. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Robert Glenn Ketchum—Landscapes in Alaska and the Hudson Valley. Through May 28. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

Andrew Moore—Silver prints made with a pinhole video camera. Through June 4. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Laurie Simmons—Black-and-white photographs and color cibachromes. In one series, Simmons suspends thought balloons over the heads of ventriloquists' dummies; in another, she appears as one of the dummies. Through May 28. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

"The Street Walkers"—Photographs taken surreptitiously by Leo Levinstein and Frank Paulin, capturing life in Mexico, Haiti, India, and Europe. Through June 18. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Henri Cartier-Bresson: Hommage." Forty photographs by the French master. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War." A remarkable set of photographs by Carole Gallagher, documenting the victims of radioactive fallout in the Western United States. Through June 19. . . . ¶ Bright, candy-colored photographs of life in northern New Mexico, by Alex Harris. Through June 19. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, and the New York Public Library.)

(Advertisement)

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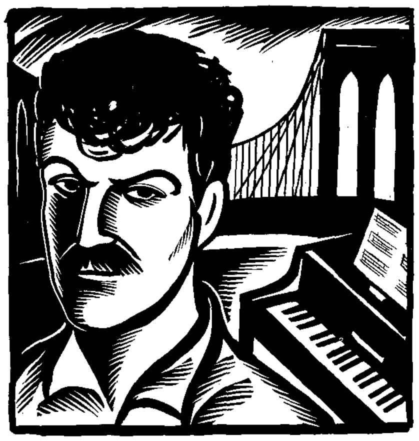
CLASSICAL MUSIC

Brave New World

Of the four basic ingredients of music—melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre—Western music has historically ceded pride of place to harmony and to the way harmonies unroll over time. On May 20 at St. Michael's Church (Amsterdam Avenue at 99th Street), the impeccably coördinated women's quartet known as Anonymous 4 will focus on the time and place when the Western tradition defined its course: late-twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century Paris. That's when composers started writing for three (and occasionally four) voices and figured out how to notate their music in defined rhythms—a giant step beyond the metrically fluid two-part pieces that had previously marked the outer limit.

Anonymous 4's interest in this breakthrough style is reflected in its name, which is the scholarly designation for an otherwise unknown Englishman whose treatise on the rhythmic notation of his time happened to fall fourth in a prominent nineteenth-century anthology of medieval musical writings. "The era's musical achievement compares to the invention of the wheel," says Susan Hellauer, one of the group's members. In this program, the singers will condense a full liturgical day into little more than an hour—chant interspersed with polyphonic outbursts of organum (which incorporates material from preëxisting chants) and conductus (composed entirely from scratch, free of preëxisting musical references). "We're including an especially generous selection of conductus in this program," Hellauer notes. "That's where we feel the composers achieved their most creative work, free to test the limits of harmony, rhythm, and virtuosity, sometimes with results so elaborate as to be dizzying to both performer and listener."



Composer Tobias Picker, whose "Keys to the City" will be performed by the American Symphony Orchestra.

ANTHONY RUSSO

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Avenue at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

OPERA

"Médée"—A 1693 *tragédie-lyrique* by the French Baroque composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier, with William Christie conducting Les Arts Florissants, and with stage direction by Jean-Marie Villégier. Featured singers on May 19 and May 21 are Lorraine Hunt, Mark Padmore, Bernard Deletré, Agnès Mellon, and Jean-Marc Falzmann; on May 20 and May 22, Françoise Semellaz, Paul Agnew, Jacques Bona, Monique Zanetti, and Olivier Lalouette. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 19-21 at 7:30 and May 22 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration," the première of Stephen Paulus's Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra (featuring violinist Charles Rex and cellist Christopher Rex), and Brahms' Symphony No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 19 and May 21 at 8, May 20 at 2, and May 24 at 7:30. . . . **note:** Mr. Paulus will participate in discussions following the May 19 and May 24 concerts.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside directs excerpts from operas by Verdi, Wagner, and Mussorgsky; featuring bass Paul Plishka in several arias. (Carnegie Hall. May 20 at 8.)

St. Bartholomew's Choir—James Litton directs Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" and William Duckworth's "Southern Harmony" (an hour-long collection of generally minimalist pieces inspired by Early American shape-note singing). (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 249. May 18 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Debussy's "La Mer," Ravel's D-Major Concerto (for piano left-hand, featuring Ju-Ying Song), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4. (Alice Tully Hall. May 19 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Amor Artis—Johannes Somary directs vocal and instrumental works by Lassus and Palestrina. (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts American music from the nineteen-eighties: David Del Tredici's "Happy Voices," Tobias Picker's "Keys to the City" (written to celebrate the centennial of the Brooklyn Bridge, in 1983, and here featuring the composer as solo pianist), Barbara Kolb's "Voyants," and Richard Wilson's "Articulations." (Avery Fisher Hall. May 22 at 3. . . . **note:** Mr. Wilson will moderate a pre-concert discussion, beginning at 1:30 and open to ticket holders.)

New York Youth Symphony—Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducts Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2, Strauss's Horn Concerto No. 1 (featuring Matthew Scheffelmann), and a new work by Keith Fitch; Hilan Warshaw conducts Verdi's "La Forza del Destino" Overture, and Steph[illegible] Coleman conducts the "Four Dance Episodes" from Copland's "Rodeo." (Carnegie Hall. May 22 at 3.)

Virtuoso Strings—Laurine Celeste Fox directs the string orchestra in Handel's G-Major Concerto Grosso (Op. 6, No. 1), Elgar's Serenade for Strings, Victor Herbert's "Four Songs" for Cello and Orchestra (featuring Ellen Hassman), the "Summer" Concerto from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" (with violinist Byung-kook Kwak), two sonatas by Cherubini for French horn and string orchestra (with Phillip Myers), and Oedoen Partos's "Yiskor." (Chapel of the Good Shepherd, 543 Main St., Roosevelt Island. May 22 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Bach Cantatas—Gail Archer directs four solo cantatas by Bach: No. 51 ("Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!," with soprano Barbara Shirvis), No. 35 (with mezzo-soprano Karen Clark Young), No. 160 (with tenor James Russell), and No. 56 ("Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen," with bass Kevin Deas). (Church of the Epiphany, 239 E. 21st St. 475-1966. May 22 at 5.)

I Cantori di New York—Mark Shapiro directs works by Carter, Copland, Barber, Stefan Wolpe, Bernhard Lewkovitch, and Carol Barnett. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. May 22 at 7. For information about tickets, call 439-4758.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducts an evening of light music, with pianist John Bayless, cabaret singer Andrea Marcovicci, and George Steinbrenner included on the guest list. (Carnegie Hall. May 23 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Lunchtime Music—Outdoor, fair-weather concerts in Bryant Park. May 18 and May 20: Mezzo-soprano Tamara Kaufman, tenor Mark Marriott, and baritone Timothy Sarris. . . . ¶ May 23: The Cardinal Brass Quintet. (Afternoons at 12:30. Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Kiri Te Kanawa—The soprano sings songs and arias; with Julius Rudel conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 18 at 8.)

Members of the Little Orchestra Society—Harpsichordist Kenneth Cooper anchors a program of chamber concertos and sonatas by Vivaldi and Domenico Scarlatti. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 18 at 8.)

Don Hulbert—Flutist, performing Baroque suites and sonatas by Hotteterre and two Bachs (Johann Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel), as well as twentieth-century works by Robert Dick, George Enescu, Messiaen, and Dutilleux; with several assisting artists. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 18 at 8.)

Israel Chorberg—Violinist, playing unaccompanied works by Hindemith, Claudio Santoro, José Serebrier, Wendy Mae Chambers, and Sergio Cervetti (the last two being premières). (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University; enter at Broadway and 116th St. May 18 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Elisabeth Weiss—Violinist, performing Brahms' D-Minor Sonata, Szymanowski's "La Fontaine d'Aréthuse," Webern's Four Pieces (Op. 7), Bach's D-Minor Unaccompanied Partita, and a new work by Schaefer Mahoney; with pianist Timothy Long. (Weill Recital Hall. May 18 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Members of the Windham String Quartet perform quartets by Milhaud (his Twelfth), Haydn (in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2, the "Quinten"), and Brahms (in A Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 19 at 7:30 and May 22 at 4.)

Joan Morris and William Bolcom—The inimitable mezzo-soprano-and-piano team offers a program of popular songs and ragtimes from the turn of the century. (Metropolitan Museum. May 20 at 7.)

"Mostly Women Composers Festival"—Three different programs of works by Thea Musgrave, Sheila Silver, Emma Lou Diemer, Judith Shatin, Carolyn Bremer, Elisenda Fabregas, and Peter Sculthorpe, among others. (Bloomingdale House of Music, 323 W. 108th St. May 20-21 at 7, with pre-concert presentations beginning at 6. . . . ¶ Horace Mann Auditorium, Teachers' College, Columbia University, Broadway at 120th St. May 22 at 4, with a pre-concert presentation at 3. No tickets necessary for festival events.)

Anonymous 4—Performing chant, organum, and conductus drawn from the liturgy for the Nativity of the Virgin, as celebrated in turn-of-the-thirteenth-century Paris. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 678-7828.)

Chris Merritt—Tenor, performing songs and arias by Handel, Schubert, Rossini, and others; with pianist Warren Jones. (Carnegie Hall. May 20 at 8.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—This year's festival of music that employs nontraditional tunings concludes with pieces by Harry Partch (his "U.S. Highball"), Julián Carrillo, and others; with an appearance by Fracture Band, a microtonal rock group. (New York University Theatre, 35 W. 4th St. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 517-3550.)

New York Guitar Quartet—Performing works by Piazzolla, Max Surla, Antonio Ruiz-Pibo, and others. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. May 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing Brahms' quartets in C Minor (Op. 51, No. 1), A Minor (Op. 51, No. 2), and B-Flat Major (Op. 67). (Metropolitan Museum. May 21 at 8.)

Eleanor Elkins—Pianist, performing music by women composers working in New York State: Elizabeth Bell, Ruth Schonthal, Marilyn Bliss, Binette Lipper, Elizabeth Pizer, Victoria Bond, Hilary Tann, Jeanne Singer, and Judith Zaimont. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

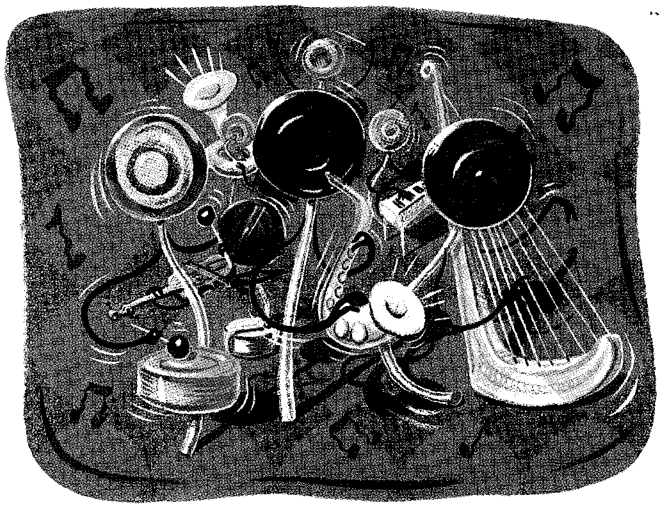
City Island Baroque Ensemble—Performing Bach's Violin and Oboe Concerto and D-Minor Harpsichord Concerto. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. May 22 at 11:30 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Music by Elie Siegmeister—Flutist Samuel Baron, violinist Martha Brody, soprano Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, and pianist Alan Mandel perform works by the late Harlem-born, Brooklyn-raised composer. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 22 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Ansonia Chamber Players—The woodwind ensemble, assisted by pianist Benjamin Loeb, performs quintets by Mozart and Beethoven. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 22 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Marie Plette—Soprano, singing Elizabethan songs, as well as works by Poulenc, Strauss, and Beethoven; with pianist Richard Mercier. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 23 at 6.)

Itzhak Perlman—The violinist performs a benefit concert, with pianist Samuel Sanders. (Metropolitan Museum. May 23 at 8.)



A "Lolli-Pops" concert by the Little Orchestra Society.

DOUG ALLEN

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—To kick off the New York Philharmonic's weeklong investigation of American "eccentric" composers, members of the orchestra play Paul Bowles' "Music for a Farce," Cage's "Second Construction," Cowell's "Set of Five," Nancarrow's "Two Canons for Ursula," Pauline Oliveros's "Tree Peace," and Terry Riley's "In C." (Merkin Concert Hall. May 23 at 8. . . . **NOTE:** Henry Brant, Alvin Lucier, Ms. Oliveros, Mr. Nancarrow, Tania León, and Jon Deak will participate in a composers' roundtable beginning at 6:30, open to ticket holders.) . . . **NOTE, TOO:** As part of the orchestra's "eccentrics" festival, an interactive sound sculpture by the artist Trimpin will be unveiled on May 23 at 5, off the lobby of the Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. It will remain open to the public through May 31.

Carter Brey—The cellist plays unaccompanied works by Bach and David Hush (a première), and assists the Shanghai String Quartet in Schubert's C-Major String Quintet. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 23 at 8.)

Meridian String Quartet—Performing Dvořák's F-Major Quartet (Op. 96, the "American"), String Quintet in E-Flat Major (Op. 97, also nicknamed the "American," and here performed with the assistance of violist Paul Neubauer), and A-Major Piano Quintet (with pianist Seymour Lipkin). (Weill Recital Hall. May 23 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing C.P.E. Bach's D-Major Quartet for piano, flute, viola, and cello; Mozart's D-Major Divertimento (K. 251); and Hummel's D-Minor Septet (Op. 74, for piano, winds, and strings). Donna-Lee Weng is the featured pianist. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 24 at 8.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

"Lolli-Pops" Concert—The Little Orchestra Society's classical-music series for three-to-five-year-olds winds up its season with a program called "The Cat and the Fiddles." Dino Anagnost is the conductor. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 21 at 10:30 and 11:45 and May 22 at 12:30 and 1:45.)

Museum Days—At the Whitney, a tour of the Joseph Stella show along with an art activity related to the Stella painting "Tree of My Life." Pre-registration is required. (Madison Ave. at 75th St. 606-0211. May 21, from 9 to 11.) . . . ¶ The American Craft Museum focusses on the exhibit "Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African American Craft Art." Workshops on bookmaking, quilting, and African dance are scheduled. (40 W. 53rd St. May 21, from noon to 2 and from 2 to 4. For reservations, which are required, call the museum's education department at 956-3535.) . . . ¶ Discussion, sketching, and other art projects are on the agenda when the Met lets the kids take a look at its new Southeast Asia galleries. (Uris Center for Education, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave[illegible] 81st St. May 21, from 11 to 12:30 and from 2:30 to 4; and May 22, from 11 to 12:30. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Street Wise—A street fair geared toward kids, with pony and giant-tortoise rides, a reptile zoo, storytelling, and the like. (Triangle at Duane St. between Greenwich and Hudson Sts. May 21, from 11 to 5. Rain date, May 22.) . . . ¶ A festival of New York street games, including box ball, skelly, potsy (hopscotch), hit the penny, and, of course, stickball. (Bank Street Bookstore, Broadway at 112th St. May 21 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

Worms R Us—Worm expert John Ameroso, of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, talks about recycling (worms love table scraps) and explains how to build a worm box. (Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. May 21 at 1 and 3.)

"Rosebud's Song"—Jacques D'Amboise's National Dance Institute presents an environmentally oriented dance work, which features an international group of a thousand school children, as well as professional dancers and musicians. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 22 at 7 and May 23 at 10:30 and 7. The evening performance on May 23 is a benefit.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dig It—Seminal figures from the Beat Generation will be in town for "The Beat Generation: Legacy and Celebration." Events include panel discussions with Gregory Corso, Hunter S. Thompson, Anne Waldman, and Allen Ginsberg; a marathon reading of Jack Kerouac's "On the Road"; an art exhibit with work by William Burroughs and Richard Avedon, among others; and a film festival, which includes "Pull My Daisy." (For schedule and ticket information, call 998-5090. Through May 22.) . . . ¶ A reading featuring Lawrence Ferlinghetti and other luminaries. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 19 at 8.)

Bucolic—On May 21-22 comes the annual reminder "You Gotta Have Park!" And who knows better than New Yorkers? In addition to enjoying special park activites, participants are encouraged to help with the big spring cleaning. In Central Park, festivities include a model-yacht regatta, fishing, lawn bowling, and roller-basketball. For more information, call 1-800 834-3832. To volunteer, call 360-2752. . . . ¶ In Prospect Park, events include the reopening of the Memorial Arch in Grand Army Plaza, a bicycle and in-line skating rodeo, tours, and a Dutch/African-American tribute to spring called Pinkster Day. For more information, call 1-718 965-8999. To volunteer, call 1-718 965-8960. . . . ¶ Van Cortlandt Park will hold a dog-and-owner look-alike contest, among other activities. For more information and to volunteer, call 1-718 430-1890.

Borscht Belt—The annual Ukrainian Festival will feature kielbasa, folk dancers, and singing. (7th St., between Second and Third Aves. May 20, from 5 to 11, May 21, from 11 to 11, and May 22, from 1 to 10.)

Metropolitan Hoedown—Carnival games, down-home food, and two-stepping—they all add up to the Broadway County Fair. Rosie O'Donnell will host this annual benefit and singer Kathy Mattea will perform. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. May 22 at 8. For tickets, call 307-7171.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Charge Your Engines!—Prior to participating in the American Tour de Sol race, on May 24, some sixty quiet, non-polluting solar- and electric-powered cars will be on display at the World Financial Center, on May 22, from 10 to 5, and May 23, from 8 to 1, giving people an opportunity to ask the designers questions, look under the hoods, and kick the tires. Related activities include miniature-solar-car races. On May 23 at 1:30: electric buses will take interested participants to the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City. Return service will also be provided. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. For more information, call 945-0505.)

The Hills Are Alive—Alpine plants are in bloom at the New York Botanical Garden. On May 21-22, from 11 to 4, at the T. H. Everett Rock Garden, there will be tours, clinics, and demonstrations, as well as performances by the Tokunaga Dance Ensemble, from 2 to 4, both days. (Bronx Park. Admission by contribution.)

Write, Write—Max Apple, Michael Chabon, and Cynthia Ozick will participate in two evenings focussing on the anthology "Writing Our Way Home: Contemporary Stories by American Jewish Writers," edited by Ted Solotaroff and Nessa Rapoport. May 18 at 8: Readings from the anthology. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ May 19 at 6: A panel discussion, "Has American-Jewish Fiction a Second Life?," moderated by Mr. Solotaroff. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

Readings—May 19 at 6:30: Leah Hager Cohen will read from her book, 'Train Go Sorry," about a year at the Lexington School for the Deaf. (Loeb Student Center, South Lobby, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 19 at 7: Thom Jones, author of the short-story collection "The Pugilist at Rest," will read a new, unpublished story. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 22 at 2: Nicholas Christopher, Thulani Davis, and Barbara Elovic, among others, will read their own work included in the anthology "Walk on the Wild Side: Urban American Poetry Since 1975." (Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—May 19 at 6:30: Stanley Crouch and Max Roach will be among the participants in a panel discussion, "Jazz and/or Rap: Tradition and the Break with Tradition." (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. 870-1671.) . . . ¶ May 23 at 7: John Ashbery will read and discuss his favorite poems by other authors. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 24 at 7:30: Charlayne Hunter-Gault will talk about her career as a journalist. (St. Luke's School, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. 924-5960.)

Walks & Tours—May 21 at 1: The National Academy of Design will tour Edith Wharton's New York, in conjunction with its current exhibit. For more information, call 369-4880. . . . ¶ May 23 at 7: The American Museum of Natural History will guide visitors through its new wing, which features mammals and their extinct relatives. For more information, call 769-5310.

SPORTS

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, May 20 at 7:05 and May 21-22 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Blue Jays, May 24 at 7:05.

Mets—Vs. the Florida Marlins, May 18 at 7:40.

CHAMPIONSHIP HOCKEY

Commuter Hockey—In another local series, the Rangers (who beat the Washington Capitals, 4–1) will face the Devils (who doused the Boston Bruins, 4–2) in the finals of the N.H.L. Eastern Conference playoffs.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL

Nets Knicked—Having dunked the Nets, 3–1, in the first round of the N.B.A. playoffs, the Knicks are going toe-to-toe with their 1993 nemeses, the Chicago Bulls. As of press time, the Knicks were standing tall, 2–0.

TRACK AND FIELD

New York Games '94—Carl Lewis and Jackie Joyner-Kersee, among other world-class athletes, will compete on May 22, from 10:30 to 3. Events include the hurdles, the long jump, and the shot-put competition. (Columbia University's Wien Stadium, Broadway at 218th St. For more information, call 860-4455.)

CAPITAL APPRECIATION

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THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
22	23	24				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 31.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Backbeat" (†).
Theatre 2: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 19: "Cronos" (directed by Guillermo del Toro, in English and Spanish). From May 20: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Gus Van Sant).
Theatre 4: "Kika" (†).
Theatre 5: "Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.
Theatre 6: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August), with Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, and Winona Ryder.

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"The Conviction" (1990, Marco Bellocchio; in Italian).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "With Honors" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dream Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "Trading Mom" (Tia Brelis), with Sissy Spacek.

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 2: "Being Human" (†).
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 4: Through May 19: "Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant), with Eric Stoltz. From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 5: "You So Crazy" (Thomas Schlamme), with Martin Lawrence.
Theatre 6: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).
Theatre 7: "The Crow" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom), with Victoria Foyt.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 3: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 4: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Secret Rapture" (Howard Davies), with Juliet Stevenson; and "Savage Nights" (Cyril Collard, in French).
Theatre 6: "The Inkwell" (†).
Theatre 7: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 4: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Being Human" (†).
Theatre 6: "No Escape" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant.
Theatre 3: "Clean Slate" (†).
Theatre 4: "Being Human" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Backbeat" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 3: "No Escape" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Inkwell" (†).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Bad Girls" (Jonathan Kaplan).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 2: "Clean Slate" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The House of the Spirits" (Bille August), with Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, and Winona Ryder.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 2: "Crooklyn" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Secret Rapture" (Howard Davies), with Juliet Stevenson.
Theatre 3: "Germinal" (Claude Berri, in French); and "In Custody" (Ismail Merchant, in Urdu).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.
Theatre 2: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 3: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller), with Winona Ryder, Ethan Hawke, and Stiller.
Theatre 4: "The Paper" (Ron Howard), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 5: "Being Human" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (Jane Campion), with Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, and Sam Neill.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Trading Mom" (Tia Brelis), with Sissy Spacek. From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 2: Through May 19: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis). From May 20: "Maverick."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 2: "With Honors" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through May 19: "Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.
From May 20: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Gus Van Sant).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Backbeat" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Clean Slate" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Crooklyn" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (Ron Howard), with Michael Keaton.

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Trading Mom" (Tia Brelis), with Sissy Spacek. From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 2: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 3: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).
Theatre 4: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August), with Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, and Winona Ryder.
Theatre 5: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Crow" (†).

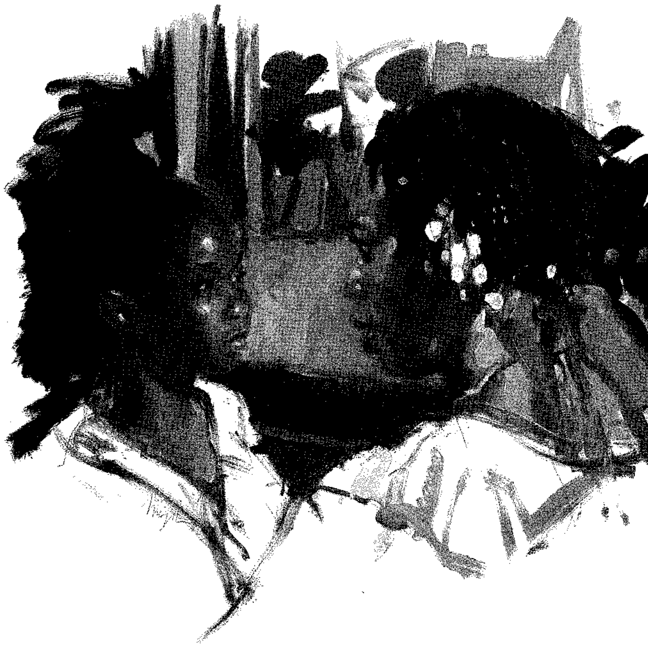
WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Bhaji on the Beach" (directed by Gurinder Chadha).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (Ray Müller; in German) and "Sunday's Children" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (Ron Howard), with Michael Keaton.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Clean Slate" (†).
Theatre 2: "Crooklyn" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through May 22: The 1994 New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. From May 23: "The Blue Kite" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 22: The 1994 New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. From May 23: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski), with Peter Coyote, Emmanuelle Seigner, Hugh Grant, and Kristin Scott Thomas.
Theatre 4: Through May 21: "The Blue Kite" (†). From May 22: "Desperate Remedies" (Stewart Main and Peter Wells).



Zelda Harris and Alfre Woodard in "Crooklyn."

FRANCIS LIVINGSTON

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Crooklyn" (†).
Theatre 2: "Crooklyn" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 19: "Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant). From May 20: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Gus Van Sant).
Theatre 4: "The Inkwell" (†).
Theatre 5: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (†).
Theatre 7: Through May 19: "Clean Slate" (†). From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 8: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 9: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August), with Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, and Winona Ryder.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "You So Crazy" (Thomas Schlamme), with Martin Lawrence.
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (Ron Howard), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 3: "Sankofa" (Haile Gerima).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi), with Stockard Channing, Will Smith, and Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (Jonathan Demme), with Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington.
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams and Sally Field.
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears), with Colm Meaney, Tina Kellegher, and Ruth McCabe.
Theatre 6: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"That's Entertainment! III" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Dream Lover" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August), with Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, and Winona Ryder.
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music" (Rachel Liebling), a documentary.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Widow's Peak" (John Irvin), with Mia Farrow, Joan Plowright, and Natasha Richardson.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski), with Peter Coyote, Emmanuelle Seigner, Hugh Grant, and Kristin Scott Thomas.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Crooklyn" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "A Tale of Winter" (Eric Rohmer, in French).
Theatre 2: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (†).
Theatre 3: "Kika" (†).
Theatre 4: "Kika" (†).
Theatre 5: "Red Rock West" (†).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 2: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (†).
Theatre 3: "With Honors" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 19: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis). From May 20: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Gus Van Sant).
Theatre 5: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 6: Through May 19: "Being Human" (†). From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom), with Victoria Foyt.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Paper" (Ron Howard), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 2: "Trading Mom" (Tia Brelis).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Clean Slate" (†).
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (Thomas Schlamme), with Martin Lawrence.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 2: "Trading Mom" (directed by Tia Brelis), with Sissy Spacek.
Theatre 3: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).
Theatre 4: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 5: Through May 19: "Being Human" (†). From May 20: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (†).
Theatre 7: "Surviving the Game" (Ernest Dickerson).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Crow" (†).

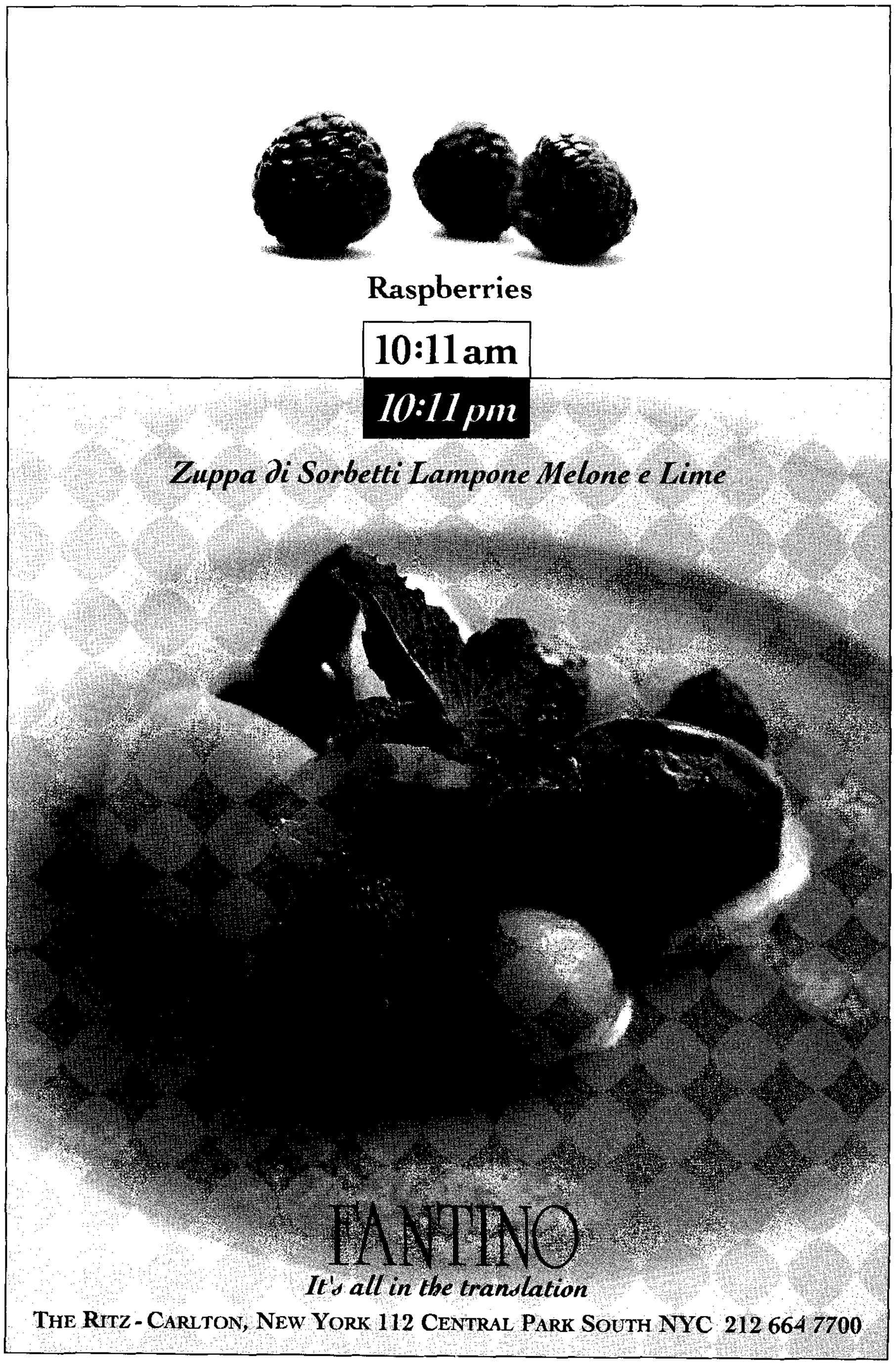
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "You So Crazy" (Thomas Schlamme), with Martin Lawrence.
Theatre 2: "The Crow" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Inkwell" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Brainscan" (John Flynn), with Edward Furlong and Frank Langella.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Crooklyn" (†).
Theatre 2: "Clean Slate" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through May 19: "Cabaret" (1972, directed by Bob Fosse), with Liza Minnelli, Michael York, and Joel Grey.
May 20-22: "The Pajama Game" (1957, George Abbott and Stanley Donen), with Doris Day, John Raitt, Carol Haney, and Eddie Foy.
May 23-24: "Kiss Me Kate" (1953, George Sidney), with Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, and Ann Miller.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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 18: "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (1965, Robert Aldrich), with Bette Davis and Olivia de Havilland; and "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Aldrich), with Davis and Joan Crawford.
May 19: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock), with Henry Fonda, Vera Miles, and Anthony Quayle; and "Dial M for Murder" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock), with Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, and Robert Cummings.
May 20-21: "The Manchurian Candidate" (1962, John Frankenheimer), with Frank Sinatra and Laurence Harvey; and "Seconds" (1966, Frankenheimer), with Rock Hudson.
May 22: "Duck Soup" (1933, Leo McCarey) and "Monkey Business" (1931, Norman McLeod), both with the Marx Brothers.
May 23: "The Rules of the Game" (†); and "Pépé le Moko" (1937, Julien Duvivier; in French).
May 24: "Lies My Father Told Me" (1975, Ján Kadár) and "The Little Kidnappers" (1954, Philip Leacock).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 19 at 2:30: A program of French silent films, 1900-08. . . . ¶ May 19 at 3 and 6: "Sacred Lies, Civil Truths" (1992), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 19 at 6: "El Dorado" (1921, directed by Marcel L'Herbier; a French silent film). . . . ¶ May 20 at 2:30 and May 22 at 5: "One, Two, Three" (1961, Billy Wilder), with James Cagney, Horst Buchholz, Pamela Tiffin, Arlene Francis, and Lilo Pulver. . . . ¶ May 20 at 2:30: "The Organ Builders of Bethnal Green" (1970, Henry Lewes) and other short films. . . . ¶ May 20 at 6 and May 22 at 2: "Heaven and Earth" (1993, Oliver Stone), with Tommy Lee Jones, Joan Chen, Haing S. Ngor, and Hiep Thi Le. . . . ¶ May 20 at 6:30: "America" (1980, James Ackerman). . . . ¶ May 21 at 2 and May 23 at 6: "The Killers" (1946, Robert Siodmak), with Burt Lancaster and Ava Gardner. . . . ¶ May 21 at 2:30: "The Phillips Collection" (1986, Edgar B. Howard and Seth Schneidman). . . . ¶ May 21 at 5 and May 23 at 2:30: "A Rage in Harlem" (1991, Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Robin Givens, and Danny Glover. . . . ¶ May 21 at 5: "Jack Levine: Feast of Pure Reason" (1986, David Sutherland). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2:30: "Large Scale Projects: Claes Oldenberg/Coosje van Bruggen" (1991, Lana Jokel and Nicholas Doob). . . . ¶ May 22 at 5: "Franklin White" (1993, Kelley Ellsworth) and three other short films. . . . ¶ May 24 at 2:30: "Dark Eyes" (1987, Nikita Mikhalkov; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 24 at 6: Two documentaries by Norman Seider and short animated films by Richard Protovin and others. . . . ¶ May 24 at 6: "Video Art to Virtual Reality" (1992, Anne Barclay Morgan and Gregory Randall Miller) and "Pine Barrens" (1975, Nancy Holt).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 18 at 2, 5:10, and 8:15: "The Ex-Mrs. Bradford" (1936, Stephen Roberts), with Jean Arthur and William Powell. . . . ¶ May 18 at 3:40, 6:40, and 9:45: "The Case of the Howling Dog" (1934, Alan Crosland), with Warren William. . . . ¶ May 19 at 2, 5:15, and 8:30: "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (†). . . . ¶ May 19 at 3:40, 7, and 10:05: "The Kennel Murder Case" (1933, Michael Curtiz), with Mary Astor and Powell. . . . ¶ May 20 at 2, 5:05, and 8:10: "The Saint in New York" (1938, Ben Holmes), with Louis Hayward. . . . ¶ May 20 at 3:30, 6:40, and 9:50: "Fast Company" (1938, Edward Buzzell), with Florence Rice and Melvyn Douglas. . . . ¶ May 21 at 4, 7:15, and 10:30, and May 23 at 4: "Meet Nero Wolfe" (1936, Herbert Biberman), with Edward Arnold. . . . ¶ May 21 at 5:30 and 8:45 and May 23 at 2: "Eyes in the Night" (1942, Fred Zinnemann), with Ann Harding and Arnold. . . . ¶ May 22 at 4 and 7:15: "Thunder on the Hill" (1951, Douglas Sirk), with Claudette Colbert. . . . ¶ May 22 at 5:45 and 9: "The Penguin Pool Murder" (1932, George Archainbaud), with Edna May Oliver.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Sergei Paradjanov. May 21 at 2: "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" (1964). . . . ¶ May 21 at 4: "Andriesch" (1954). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2: "The Color of Pomegranates" (1968). . . . ¶ May 22 at 4: "Ukrainian Rhapsody" (1960).

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films by American independent filmmakers. May 24 at 7: "You Are Not I" (1981, Sara Driver). . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "Stranger Than Paradise" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 18 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Babette's Feast" (1988, Gabriel Axel; in Danish and French), with Stéphane Audran.

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A retrospective of films and videos by Willie Varela. Call for schedule and screening times.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of films from Africa. May 21 at 2: "Fire Eyes" (1993, Soraya Mire). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2: "In the Name of Christ" (1993, Roger Gnoan M'Bala).

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—A retrospective of Shiro Toyoda films. May 20 at 6:30: "Pilgrimage at Night" (1959). . . . ¶ May 21 at 1: "Madame Aki" (1963). . . . ¶ May 21 at 3: "Illusion of Blood" (1965).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at [illegible] St. (505-5181)—May 20-22 at 6 and 8: "The Life & Times of Charlie Putz" (1993, Robert Rothbard). . . . ¶ May 20 at 10: "Zorns Lemma" (1970, Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ May 21 at 4: A film by Yasunori Yamamoto. . . . ¶ May 21 at 10 and May 22 at 6: New works by Brooks Hunyady, Robert Fenz, and Abraham Ravett.

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A series of films produced by ZDF German Television Network since the fall of the Berlin Wall. May 19 at 6: "Dead Letters" (1991, Karl Fruchtmann). . . . ¶ May 20 at 6: "Violence Is the Last Resort" (1993, Rainer Kaufmann). . . . ¶ May 21 at 2: "Sleeping Dogs" (1992, Max Färberböck). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2: "No Mention of Violence" (1990, Theodor Kotulla).

Manuel Neri

"Bull Jumper III" Bronze

GROUNDS FOR SCULPTURE

SPRING
SUMMER
EXHIBITION
94

Exhibition dates:
May 21 through
September 30, 1994

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At Film Forum 2, "The Pajama Game," "Damn Yankees," and "Cabaret," in a festival of films choreographed by, directed by, or featuring Bob Fosse.

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Bhaji on the Beach—A group of Indian women spanning three generations spend a day in the British seaside resort of Blackpool. With Kim Vithana, Sarita Khajuria, and Lalita Ahmed. Written by Meera Syal. Directed by Gurinder Chadha. Opening May 18.

Desperate Remedies—Intrigue, deception, and romance in a New Zealand town in the eighteen-sixties. With Jennifer Ward-Lealand, Kevin Smith, and Clifford Curtis. Written and directed by Stewart Main and Peter Wells. Opening May 22.

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues—Gus Van Sant's long-awaited adaptation of Tom Robbins' best-seller, starring Uma Thurman as Sissy Hankshaw. Also with Lorraine Bracco, Angie Dickinson, Heather Graham, John Hurt, Rain Phoenix, and Keanu Reeves. Opening May 20.

Maverick—A big-screen adaptation of the vintage TV Western, with Mel Gibson as Bret Maverick, Jodie Foster as his wily cohort, and James Garner as the lawman on their trail. Also with James Coburn and Graham Greene. Written by William Goldman and directed by Richard Donner. Opening May 20.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Backbeat—Iain Softley's movie tells the story of Stuart Sutcliffe (Stephen Dorff), who was John Lennon's best friend at the Liverpool College of Art and, for a short time, the bass player of the Beatles. The picture doesn't quite succeed in turning this obscure sideman into a pop-culture myth in his own right. In the period that the screenplay covers—roughly, from August, 1960, when the group played its first night-club gig in Hamburg, to April, 1962, when Sutcliffe died of a brain hemorrhage—the Beatles were unambiguously John Lennon's band. And, despite all Softley's efforts to deflect our attention to the tragic ironies of Sutcliffe's brief career, Lennon (Ian Hart) dominates the movie, too. When the picture concentrates on Lennon's edgy wit and on the fierce, joyful music that his band is making, it's terrific. But when it focusses on its nominal hero and his love affair with a worldly German bohemian (played by Sheryl Lee) it seems very ordinary. The script is by Softley, Michael Thomas, and Stephen Ward.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/25/94.) (Angelika Film Center, 34th Street Showplace, and Tower East.)

Being Human—Robin Williams is Bill Forsyth's vacillating Everyman in five vignettes depicting humanity's jumble of pusillanimity, selfishness, and love through the ages. The movie starts slowly in prehistory, pratfalls into the Roman Empire, meanders around the Middle Ages, gets shipwrecked (literally and figuratively) in the sixteenth century, and turns lachrymose in the twentieth. The episodes rarely come to a head or a punch line or a satisfying point. There are gorgeous storybook images, but the action is a stupefying combination of existential tomfoolery and squishy, pathetic humanism. The high spot comes early: as a wily Roman slave and a foolish master, Williams and John Turturro pay homage to "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." Theresa Russell delivers the narration, a failed deconstructionist whimsy about this being "the story of a story."—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, and First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . ¶ 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center; through May 19.)

The Blue Kite—A refined, strong-minded political drama, all the more telling for being so quiet. The director, Tian Zhuangzhuang, is just the kind of casual satirist that the Chinese authorities could do without; the movie met fierce official resistance during postproduction, and Tian has now been banned from further filming. The story begins, in 1953, with the death of Stalin, and lasts until 1967; in that time, a young boy named Tietou grows up and goes through three fathers, each of them laid low by persecution. Tietou may be a pain to his long-suffering mother, but his misbehavior is just the first stirring of a rebellious spirit. The movie seems clean and steady, a corrective to the lushness and extravagance that, for better or worse, has come to be seen as the house style of Chinese cinema. In Mandarin.—A.L. (5/2/94) (Quad Cinema. No performances on Sunday, May 22.)

Clean Slate—One way to capitalize on Dana Carvey's lunacy and mimicry might be to guide him through a multipart role à la Peter Sellers or Jerry Lewis. In this forgettable farce, Carvey plays a private eye who barely has a single identity—he loses his memory every time he goes to sleep. Robert King's gimcrack script scants personality in favor of a frantic plot about a beautiful woman of intrigue (Valeria Golino), a super-rich villain (Michael Gambon), and a fabulously valuable coin. Carvey has such a slender big-screen presence that his character evaporates before his memory does. The director, Mick Jackson, provides visual grace notes (some filched from his "L.A. Story") and the details get humorously scrambled, like a live-action game of Mad Libs. But the movie is so flimsy and impersonal that it leaves no imprint. The most robust ego belongs to Barkley, who plays Carvey's feisty vision-impaired Jack Russell terrier. He's got killer canine timing.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, East 85th Street, Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through May 19.)

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

Crooklyn—With Alfre Woodard and Delroy Lindo, directed by Spike Lee. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

The Crow—With Brandon Lee, directed by Alex Proyas. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, and Embassy.)

Dream Lover—Like many other fledgling writer-directors, Nicholas Kazan chooses a chichi conceit, spinning a plot fit for "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" into an essay on the mystery of the Other and an attack on the notion of "the dream girl." James Spader plays a wealthy divorced architect who falls for Mädchen Amick, an elusive and admittedly "screwed-up" woman who gives new meaning to the words drop-dead gorgeous. (Larry Miller, Fredric Lehne, and Bess Armstrong are their small circle of friends.) In the more mundane scenes, Kazan creates a hollow stylized environment for hollow stylish yuppies. But Kazan really comes a cropper in Spader's recurring nightmares, set at a carnival with a jeering clown—every time that harlequin appears you can sense Fellini flipping. With William Shockley in a deft, ominous cameo as Amick's down-home Texas ex.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Festival.)

The Inkwell—Young Matty Rich (the director of "Straight Out of Brooklyn") tries for gentleness but achieves feebleness in this seventies period piece about a misfit African-American teenager (Larenz Tate) who gains confidence and loses his virginity during a Martha's Vineyard vacation. It's a dilution of "Tea and Sympathy" and "Summer of '42," seasoned with a gratingly farcical treatment of the friction between Tate's ex-Black Panther dad (Joe Morton) and capitalist uncle (Glynn Turman). The script is credited to Tom Ricostronza and Paris Qualles.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, and Embassy.)

Kika—A new farrago from Pedro Almodóvar—as outrageous as his previous efforts, but without the suavity. Verónica Forqué plays Kika, a makeup artist whose life is complicated by a lesbian maid, a brooding lover, the lesbian maid's delinquent brother (who used to be a porno star), and the brooding lover's American stepfather (who may or may not be a murderer). Almodóvar shuffles them around in various combinations, but his career as a shock merchant is running out of steam; the movie feels hammy and strained, and the details are chucked in your face. Almodóvar has devised a subplot, starring Victoria Abril, which is meant to attack the emotional greed of television, but he succeeds only in drawing attention to his own failings; sensitive souls may not want to hang around to see out the prolonged rape scene. Almodóvar's palette of colors is as bright and warming as ever, but what he paints with it leaves you cold. In Spanish.—A.L. (5/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

No Escape—Martin Campbell's futuristic adventure story, set in a penal colony on a remote jungle island, is a movie about, and for, desperate men. On its own terms, it's an exciting picture, with plenty of brawny action scenes, and teen-age boys will probably have a great time. Grownups, distracted by the erratic acting and the simple-minded script (by Michael Gaylin and Joel Gross), may not be able to give themselves over completely to the movie's chases and battles and eyeball-to-eyeball macho confrontations. By the end of this savage, hairy-chested spectacle, you're dead tired from trying not to think. With Ray Liotta, Lance Henriksen, Stuart Wilson, Ernie Hudson, Kevin Dillon, and Ian McNeice. The imaginative cinematography is by Phil Meheux.—T.R. (5/9/94) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

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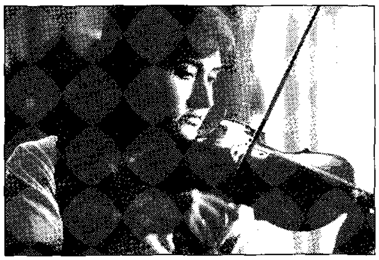

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Red Rock West—This clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot ranks tops among low-budget neo-noirs. Taut and dead-pan witty, it makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Dennis Hopper and J. T. Walsh do their freshest, snappiest work in years, and Lara Flynn Boyle is a tense, ambiguous love object. Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. Dwight Yoakam contributes a piquant cameo as a tough, helpful truck driver.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

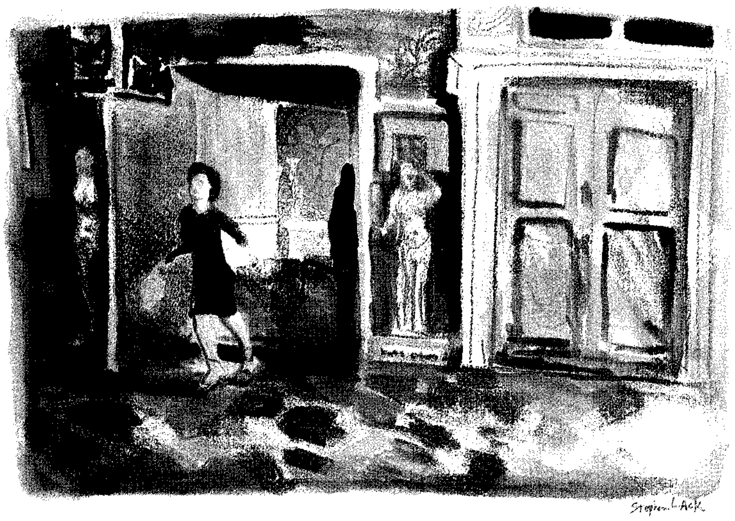
Serial Mom—John Waters takes a risk and goes mainstream for his latest stab at zero-taste comedy. Kathleen Turner plays Beverly, a Baltimore housewife with a dentist husband (Sam Waterston), two nice kids, and a sideline in multiple murder. Waters rigs the look of it, and makes things easy for himself; when life has the silly shine of a fifties commercial, you don't have to dig very deep to find dirt. The film is neither as funny nor as shocking as Waters might like to think, but Turner rescues it; she enjoys herself hugely, and hauls us along for the ride. Her sex-bomb charge may be defused, but her career as a queen bitch is just beginning.—A.L. (5/2/94) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center.)

Sunday's Children—Daniel Bergman's film—which is based on an autobiographical novel by his famous father, Ingmar—is mostly set in and around a summerhouse in the late twenties, and the picture has a lazy, daydreamy rhythm. There's no narrative momentum to speak of: all that holds the story together is the muddled consciousness of its protagonist, eight-year-old Ingmar (Henrik Linnros), nicknamed Pu, who's trying—and largely failing—to understand the sensations that seem to come at him from everywhere. Daniel Bergman gives this rambling memoir a shimmering, lyrical clarity, and his direction of the actors is extraordinary; he gets a superb performance from Thommy Berggren, who plays Pu's minister father, Erik. Also with Lena Endre and Per Myrberg. Cinematography by Tony Forsberg. In Swedish.—T.R. (4/25/94) (Film Forum.)

That's Entertainment! III—A third compilation of clips from the golden, or at least brassy, age of the Hollywood musical—memorable moments, supposedly, although most of the classic stuff was pinched by the two earlier installments, and the tactic here is to remind you of moments you may have forgotten. There's a rather daring shower sequence from the thirties, a lot of Esther Williams and her amazing waterproof smile, and a trio of sisters doing the crab in a farmyard. Kitsch fans will have a ball; they can choose between Judy Garland in war paint, just before she cracked up and had to be pulled from "Annie Get Your Gun," and a closeup of Joan Crawford in blackface. Connoisseurs can get off on previously unseen outtakes of Fred Astaire, but the whole enterprise is starting to look as creaky as the stars who introduce the clips.—A.L. (5/16/94) (Ziegfe[illegible]

Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould—Glenn Gould, as scorned and revered as any figure in modern music, died in 1982. François Girard's new movie honors his strong-willed, idiosyncratic genius with a suitably offbeat approach: a bunch of little films, none lasting more than a few minutes, all of them angling for a new take on the pianist's life and work—thirty-two ways of looking at Glenn Gould. Scenes from his boyhood and professional career are neatly dramatized; the Canadian actor Colm Feore plays the adult Gould, though he never, thank goodness, tries to reproduce his manner at the keyboard. In between come interviews, dashes of animation, and even a sequence shot in X-ray. The finale—a Gould recording of Bach is carried into deep space by a Voyager spacecraft—leaves you gawking.—A.L. (4/18/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

When a Man Loves a Woman—Adopting the Betty Ford approach to dramaturgy, this upscale tale of an alcoholic wife and mom (Meg Ryan) and her supportive, frustrated husband (Andy Garcia) aims to be therapeutic or nothing. It makes triply sure the audience doesn't miss any points, but are the points even well-taken? What the audience sees is a good guy stretching himself to the limit yet being condemned for his lack of understanding. After her stay in a substance-abuse clinic, Ryan is meant to be a scrappy realist and Garcia an enabling denier. Although Garcia is instructed to "listen" more closely to what Ryan is telling him, she does a rotten job of articulating; he's supposed to listen to what she doesn't say. The real message is that spouses must be pushed into their own breakdowns before they can help addictive mates. The Ron Bass–Al Franken script has a few clever, well-observed moments before monotony sets in; Luis Mandoki, the director, fails to exploit the funny bits—he accentuates the negative.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)



At the Little Theatre, Claire Nebout in "The Conviction."

STEPHEN LACK

With Honors—Without shame. It's like "Love Story," "The Fisher King," "The Paper Chase," "Dead Poets Society," and "Scent of a Woman" diced together in a Veg-O-Matic. Joe Pesci plays a feisty homeless man who thwarts Harvard senior Brendan Fraser's pursuit of a summa. He becomes the father Fraser never got to know; Fraser becomes the son Pesci never got to know. Pesci is a quick thinker, able to silence a blowhard professor (Gore Vidal) in a single spiel. The director, Alek Keshishian ("Truth or Dare"), and the screenwriter, William Mastrosimone, ply cheap, fraudulent emotions. One minute the students fear Vidal, the next they diss him by cheering Pesci's put-downs. With Moira Kelly, Patrick Dempsey, and Josh Hamilton as Fraser's roommates.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1939)—Basil Rathbone was born to wear Holmes' cape and deerstalker cap, to smoke his brierroot pipe, and to rattle off his ratiocinations with merry hubris. Rathbone's perfect wedge of a profile sliced through the London fog, and he used his imposing brow to signal one idea while his glinting eyes intimated another. He and Nigel Bruce, as Dr. Watson, developed a rapport as close, and sometimes as comic, as that of Hope and Crosby. They're at full throttle in this breathless tale of Professor Moriarty's attempt to exploit the restlessness of Holmes' intelligence. The arch-villain Moriarty (George Zucco) sends the sleuth on a wild-albatross chase while the evil genius himself schemes to make off with the crown jewels. Rathbone seizes the chance to celebrate and satirize—simultaneously—Holmes' peripatetic brilliance. Bruce's Watson never makes the Ed McMahon-like error of applauding Holmes' cleverness too loudly; he's more like a genteel Sancho Panza, suspicious of his pal's fantastic rationality. The result is everything a civilized thriller should be: witty, playful, and exciting. And Ida Lupino brings a hint of sexuality into Holmes' hermetic universe. She's refreshingly fervid—you can feel the heart of a dame beating within the damsel in distress. Alfred L. Werker directed Edwin Blum and William Drake's adaptation of William Gillette's play.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 19.)

The Rules of the Game (1939)—Perhaps the most influential of all French films, and one of the most richly entertaining. Jean Renoir's legendary butchered and then restored masterpiece is a farce about a large houseparty, gathered for a hunt, where the servants and masters begin to chase and shoot each other. The party at the country château is a tragicomic world in motion; ironically, once the whole mechanism is spinning the man who begins at the center of it—the romantic aviator (Roland Toutain)—is flicked off. With Marcel Dalio as the Marquis, Julien Carette as the poacher, Gaston Modot as the gamekeeper, Nora Gregor as Christine, Mila Parély as Genevieve, Paulette Dubost as Lisette, and Renoir as Octave. The script, by Renoir, assisted by Carl Koch, was derived from Alfred de Musset's "Les Caprices de Marianne." In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 23.)

Stranger Than Paradise (1984)—The young writer-director Jim Jarmusch (who raised the $120,000 to make the movie) uses the minimalist aesthetic for low-key comic effects. This punk picaresque is in black-and-white, and each scene is a single take followed by a blackout; the three anomic principal characters—deadpan deadbeats—live in dead space. Jarmusch keeps the picture formal and cool, and it has an odd, nonchalant charm; it's fun. But it's softhearted fun—shaggy-dog minimalism—and it doesn't have enough ideas (or laughs) for its ninety-minute length. It's so hemmed in that it has the feel of a mousy Eastern European comedy. With John Lurie as Willie, Eszter Balint as Eva, and Richard Edson as Eddie. Cinematography by Tom DeCillo.—P.K. (Symphony Space; May 24.)

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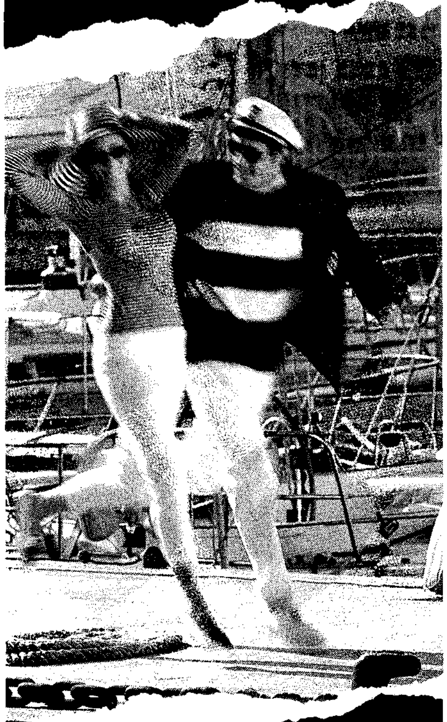

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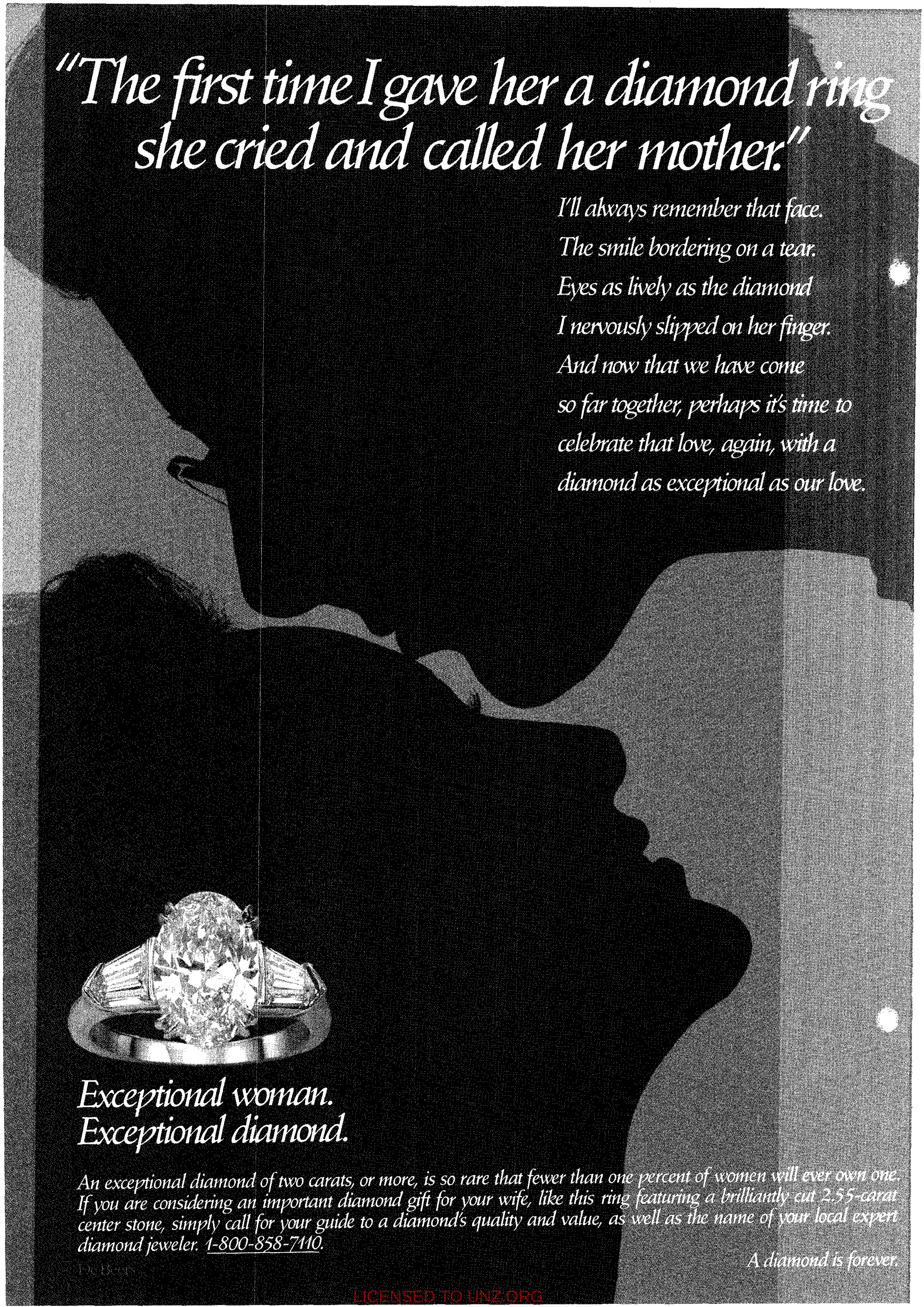

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NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MR. BELLOW'S PLANET

SAUL BELLOW was in town the other day, to deliver a lecture on anti-Semitism, and, truth be told, he seemed out of sorts. On the morning we met him, at the Lotos Club, on the Upper East Side, he looked fit (he is seventy-eight), and was outfitted like a moderate dandy. But he was glum all the same. Recently, he and his wife, Janis, moved from Chicago to Boston, where he is a professor of literature at Boston University. It seems something of a mystery even to him why he made the move. A little more than a decade ago, Mr. Bellow had described himself as one of the faithful "who have never abandoned Chicago."

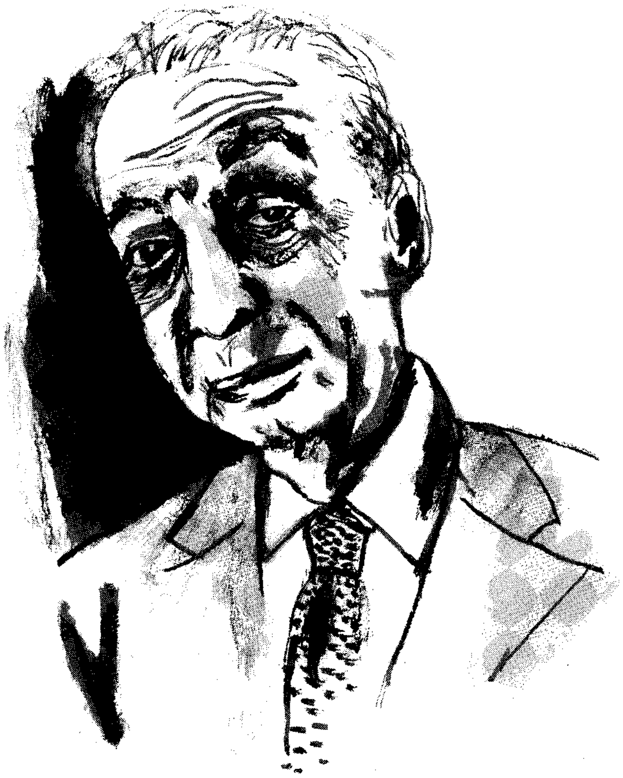
So why *did* he leave?

"I was testing my youthful plasticity," he said now, over breakfast.

And how was it going in Boston?

"Not so hot," Mr. Bellow said, his brilliant, buggy eyes widening. "I feel the rupture. Janis does, too. I felt that I had given Chicago the best years of my life, as they say in divorce court."

Besides Chicago, the other familiar ground for Mr. Bellow, in fact and in his fiction, is New York—in particular, the Upper West Side, where Artur Sammler, "with his bushy eye," rode the buses and negotiated Broadway. And now this locale, too, was—well, not so hot. "I still enjoy the Upper West Side," Mr. Bellow said, "except walking up and down Broadway is like strolling through some foreign writer's invention of an American slum. It doesn't necessarily scare me, but it's disgusting. To have known Broadway in the days when those neat little trolley cars zipped up and down! The most exotic thing about Broadway in those days was the piña-colada stands. There's an obvious drug scene now, the hustle of the homeless. I can understand why liberal principles are so potent. The real feelings are very quickly worn out. After one block, you've gone through your emotional repertory. You just don't have any more feelings to give out. So you try to take an over-all view of the thing that is more elevated, benevolent. But the fact is, you resent it and you think it's degrading."

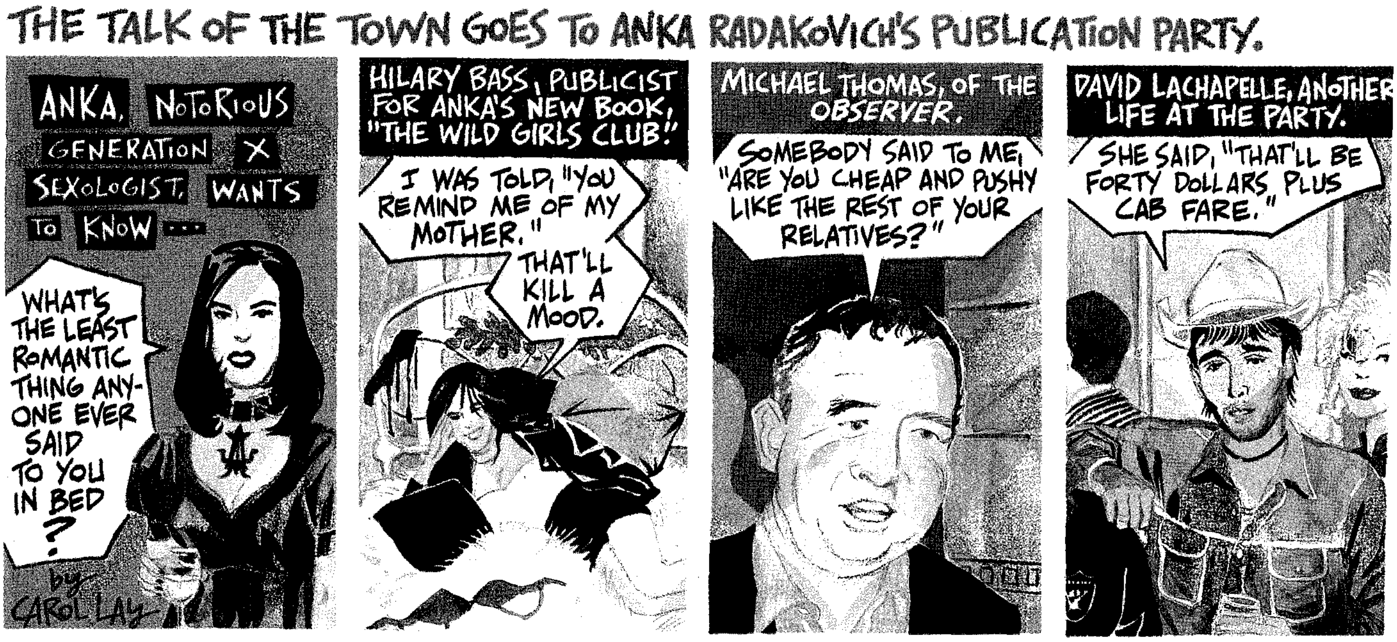


ILLUSTRATIONS BY EINAT PELED

In recent years, Mr. Bellow's political reputation has taken on a more conservative cast—his decline-of-the-West funk seemingly gloomier, the world-weariness of his fictive heroes more frequently read now as autobiographical. Mr. Bellow does not call himself a conservative, though. "I consider myself some sort of liberal, but I don't like where liberalism has gone in this country in the last twenty years," he said. "It's become mindless—medallion-wearing and placard-bearing. I have very little use for it. It's a cover also for a great deal of resentment and hatred, these terrible outbursts from people whose principles are affronted when you disagree with them. It's a bad moment in the history of the country."

He went on to say, "P.C. is really a serious threat to political health, because where there is free speech without any debate what you have is a corruption of free speech, which very quickly becomes demagogy. People in general in this country have lost the habit of debating questions. TV does it for them. People hold opinions, but the opinions are not derived from either thought or discussion. They are just acquired, as an adjunct, a confirmation of the progressive status of the person who holds these opinions—as an ornament, a decoration. It's like those Russian generals, their chests covered with medals. People wear these opinions like medals."

Mr. Bellow said he thought that the roots of P.C. were in the debates of his prime, the super-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MICHAEL THOMAS, OF THE OBSERVER.
SOMEBODY SAID TO ME, "ARE YOU CHEAP AND PUSHY LIKE THE REST OF YOUR RELATIVES?"
DAVID LACHAPELLE, ANOTHER LIFE AT THE PARTY.
SHE SAID, "THAT'LL BE FORTY DOLLARS, PLUS CAB FARE."

charged battles between anti-Communists and anti-anti-Communists. "Liberal people felt they were being dragooned, especially by Republican Administrations, into the Cold War and they were being forced to line up, and they hated that, they resented it very deeply," he said. "I think there was enough Stalinist influence in general to account for this in part, especially in a city like New York. It was transformed—it changed into liberal fanaticism after it had been Stalinism. This was the great ideological divide in the civilized world. It really did train people in attitudes of mind which have remained into the present and color the way we think about social problems in the United States."

The phenomenon of Louis Farrakhan—a figure Mr. Bellow had been watching in Chicago for many years—was also very much on his mind. "I think Farrakhan has a real appeal to the black population and in a way that expresses its inclinations," he said. "I don't know how deep the anti-Semitism runs among blacks, but it is certainly conspicuous. There is this sort of attitude among the blacks: Whatever else we may be, whatever handicaps we may labor under, we are, nevertheless, not Jews."

Mr. Bellow continued, "There was a black columnist, a very good one, many years ago, named George Schuyler. Schuyler wrote a notable piece describing the black as the mudsill of the other immigrant groups—the mudsill being a primitive step in front of a shack—and everybody steps on the black in order to rise higher. I think this is pretty much a conviction among blacks, and sometimes seemed to have a foundation, because all the other immigrant groups were rising and the blacks remained where they were, under this handicap. But that was not necessarily a Jewish conspiracy. The blacks have always been convinced that they have remained inert and passive while everybody else rose in life and used them as a stepping stone. That resentment has remained. I see it also as a result—an unfortunate result—of the civil-rights movement, that the first consequence of the civil-rights movement was the development of black anti-Semitism. It seems a very strange thing indeed."

When we had first asked Mr. Bellow about today's racial politics, he had winced, saying he hoped we could find "an undangerous way" to talk about it all. "There seems to be such a taboo on open discussion that no habits of discussion have developed, no vocabulary for discussion, no allowance made for intellectual differences, because you are immediately labelled a racist," he said. "There are certainly many blacks with whom you can talk openly. And they do the same. There's none of this poisonous stuff. With Ralph Ellison you could say anything, just speak freely, as he did. Or Stanley Crouch now, who is clear on all these questions, or William Julius Wilson, at the University of Chicago. But there are very few people in general who don't respond to the taboo."

Are things so much different from the way they were twenty years ago?

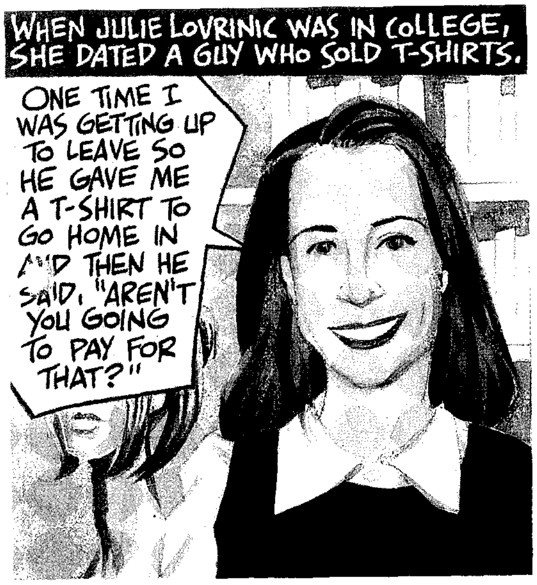
"There's a certain tangible, palpable fear of putting your foot in it now," Mr. Bellow said.

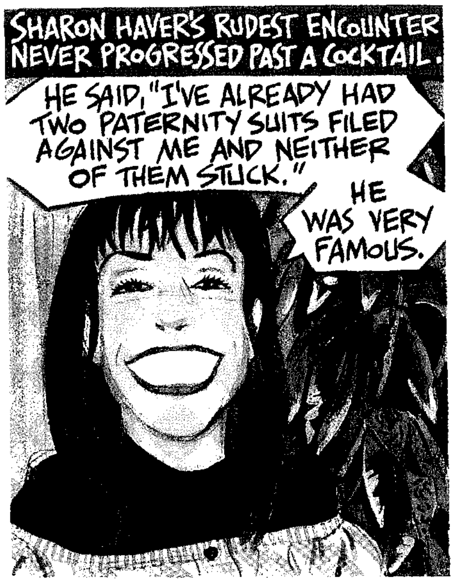
And has the new atmosphere affected his writing? Would he hesitate for fear of attack?

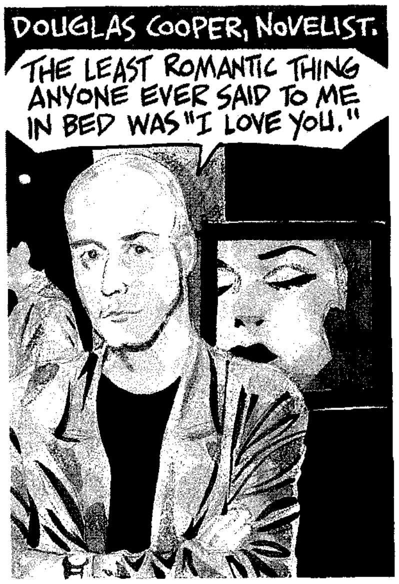
"The writing is independent," Mr. Bellow said. "It's autonomous by this time. I write as I write. If I'm going to take heat because of it—well, that's the name of the game."

HAMMERED

SEATED in his fourth-floor office last Tuesday afternoon, Christopher Burge, the chairman here of Christie's, was listing an auctioneer's nightmares. It was a few hours before Christie's big spring sale of Impressionist and modern paintings, and the auction house had the brittle, adrenalized feel of a locker room before the big game. Downstairs, a crowd was milling around the lobby, and the art handlers in the gallery were taking the Renoirs and Picassos and Modiglianis off the walls and loading them into bins. In Mr. Burge's office, the phone was ringing, and on his desk lay several dozen phone messages—from buyers and sellers and various blithe souls who seemed not to realize that the climactic moment of Christie's spring season was at hand.


WHEN JULIE LOVRINIC WAS IN COLLEGE, SHE DATED A GUY WHO SOLD T-SHIRTS.
ONE TIME I WAS GETTING UP TO LEAVE SO HE GAVE ME A T-SHIRT TO GO HOME IN AND THEN HE SAID, "AREN'T YOU GOING TO PAY FOR THAT?"


SHARON HAVER'S RUDEST ENCOUNTER NEVER PROGRESSED PAST A COCKTAIL.
HE SAID, "I'VE ALREADY HAD TWO PATERNITY SUITS FILED AGAINST ME AND NEITHER OF THEM STUCK."
HE WAS VERY FAMOUS.


DOUGLAS COOPER, NOVELIST.
THE LEAST ROMANTIC THING ANYONE EVER SAID TO ME IN BED WAS "I LOVE YOU."

Mr. Burge, a forty-seven-year-old Englishman with graying hair and a pinkish complexion, and wearing a blue pin-striped suit and horn-rimmed glasses, is also Christie's chief auctioneer, and he was close to despair—but then that is where he likes to be before taking up the gavel on a big night. "I think the end of the world is going to come, and I think of all the things that can go wrong," he said, bobbing around in his chair with sheer nervous energy. "The telephone will be disconnected when I'm talking to someone in Mexico City, and the currency-converter board will explode." Or the collectors and dealers will sit in perfect silence as those Renoirs and Picassos come up for sale. "We're sitting on a knife edge here," Mr. Burge said.

Anybody in Mr. Burge's position might well have been feeling tense this particular afternoon. More than forty per cent of the works at Christie's sale of contemporary art a week earlier had failed to move. "It was a *very* stiff room," Mr. Burge recalled. Christie's chief competitor, Sotheby's, had done almost as poorly with its contemporary-art sale that week, and art-world analysts were saying that the market hadn't yet come out of its recessionary slump. Mr. Burge scoffed at the instant trend-spotting. The problem the previous week, he maintained, was simply that many of the paintings were not very good. This week would in all likelihood be different, at least at Christie's. There were some fine pictures on sale, and some committed buyers for them. If he weren't in his typical pre-auction pessimistic mode, he quickly added, he would be "pretty confident." Mr. Burge's own theory of the auction market was appealing, if unverifiable. "It's all about delicate nuances and greed and desire and whim," he said, with a savoring look, as if he were assessing an oddly charming picture.

And, once he has the gavel in his hand, it is this knowledge of the ephemera of human feeling—or, at least, the feelings of rich collectors—that guides his conduct. "The audience when it comes in is absolutely balanced between wanting to see high prices and wanting to see failure," he said. "People are quite confrontational, and they're quite keen on disaster. And if you can win them round from that position to being keen on the evening's succeeding, because they like the atmosphere, you'll perceptibly feel the difference in the temperature of the room, and you'll find that you'll actually get more bids out of people." A little joke, Mr. Burge observed, usually eases the tension in the room; but it mustn't seem flippant.

Three hours later, Mr. Burge, having shed his pinstripes for a tuxedo, stood before a buzzing crowd and began the auction by asking for bids on a Cézanne drawing. It fetched a hundred and one thousand five hundred dollars, triple Christie's estimate. Next, a painting by Vlaminck brought a stunning six million eight hundred thousand, and a Cubist Picasso six million two. But with that the room turned cool. A Cézanne still-life went unsold, as did a Monet and a Modigliani and a Léger, and a Severini for which Mr. Burge had been sounding out Italian buyers. Mr. Burge, living his nightmare, stuck to his cultivated patter, graciously recognizing the occasional bidder. Once, trolling for offers on a small Boudin landscape, he said, "I heard a whistle at a hundred and ten thousand. Anything will do." He got his laugh, but it didn't do any good. By evening's end, half of the seventy-six pictures being auctioned were unsold, and the sale netted only about half the expected total.

Reached by phone at the end of last week, and asked his thoughts about the sale, Mr. Burge conceded that "buyers were probably nervous to some degree about economic developments." He had felt pretty rattled himself, he said, as collectors he had known for years pretended not to notice him when he tried to make eye contact. After bringing the sale to its close, he recounted, he had hurried to his office, poured himself a Scotch, squared his tuxedoed shoulders, and gone out to face a press that was, he thought, every bit as bewildered as he was.

A TREE GROWS IN BROOKLYN. MAYBE

AMONG the municipal employees who will likely keep their jobs even under the pared-down budget that

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani proposed last week is a stocky, bearded forty-one-year-old man named Kim Mulcahy. He is relieved, of course, but countless saplings, young vines, and fresh bulbs now basking in the sun at nurseries in the far reaches of the metropolitan area may not be. Mr. Mulcahy is the city Department of Transportation's director of landscape improvement, and his job is to beautify the city's bedraggled roadside landscapes. If, for instance, your rush-hour commute takes you along the Prospect Expressway, in the Windsor Terrace neighborhood of Brooklyn, which is where Mr. Mulcahy, with a team of D.O.T. engineers, is working these days, you will soon notice—as you move your eye from your watch to the vehicles at rest all around you—the presence of Boston and English ivy between the highway's shoulder and the thoroughly graffitied retaining wall.

"I call these places dysfunctional landscapes," Mr. Mulcahy said one morning earlier this month, when we met up with him along that particularly unsylvan stretch of the expressway. He was wearing a workman's shirt, jeans, construction boots, a bright-orange safety vest, and a white D.O.T. hard hat, and he was smoking a cigarette. "These places have no purpose," he went on. "They're what's left over. And yet things do grow here." He used the sole of his boot to stub out his cigarette, removed an empty cigarette pack from his vest pocket, dropped the butt into it, and motioned us toward a nearby tree. "Watch out for the rat holes," he said.

Upon reaching the tree, Mr. Mulcahy gave its trunk a friendly slap. "It's a Norway maple," he said. "It just grew here. A volunteer. Even with the soot buildup." As he walked along, with the traffic whizzing by only a few yards away, he drew our attention to other things just growing there: winter honeysuckle thriving in a clump of old tires; a patch of viburnum near a trench that he said was probably dug by a homeless person; and several healthy-looking black cherry trees. He will uproot none of these volunteers, he told us; rather, he will mix his ivies in with them and, during the summer, plant ground cover, put in a few more trees, and install a number of flower beds. "The basic, over-all theme will be bluish-gray, complemented with lavender and pale yellow," he said.

Above the midmorning din, Mr. Mulcahy expressed confidence that most of his plantings would weather the rugged environment. Social pathologies were the real problem. "Here we have drug addicts stealing trees for a little money," he said. But there was no rancor in his voice. It was spring, and the sun was warming the viburnum and the hardy maple as well as the asphalt and the hoods of passing cars, and Mr. Mulcahy went on to say, "So now we take some heavy wire cable and tie one end around a tree we're planting and the other around a brick, which we bury in the ground. It's a good anchor."

(STILL) LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

THE other evening, at the Puck Building, in SoHo, at a black-tie benefit dinner held by the American Academy in Rome on the occasion of its hundredth anniversary—and, specifically, to celebrate what the academy is calling "The Year of Architecture"—four hundred and ten architects and their friends and patrons were mingling and saying things like "Have you seen Mercedes Bass's dress tonight? It sort of looks like the Duomo" and "Can you believe that dacha in Southampton?" and "I wish that mogul over there wanted me to build something for him." The architect Robert A. M. Stern did not talk to us about Mrs. Bass or Southampton or the moguls he has built or will build for, but he did talk about his devotion to the form and structure of Gucci loafers. "If I told you how many pairs I have, I'd win the Imelda Marcos Award," he said.

The evening's "Year of Architecture" honorees were Robert Venturi, the father of postmodern architecture; Vincent Scully, the legendary Yale architectural historian; Phyllis Lambert, the head of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and an international aesthetic force; and Michael Eisner, the chairman and C.E.O. of the Walt Disney Company, whose contribution to the field consists of hiring famous architects and making them even more famous by letting them do buildings for Walt Disney World and Euro Disney. Before dinner, as Mr. Venturi was talking elegantly with us about symbolism, harmony, and civic tradition, Mr. Eisner bounded up to his side. Mr. Eisner was wearing a tie emblazoned with Mickey Mouses, and he was happy to see Mr. Venturi, who had designed a fire station for Walt Disney World.

Mr. Eisner to Mr. Venturi: "The fire station is fantastic! It's unbelievable! It's our jewel!"

Mr. Venturi smiled.

Mr. Eisner to us: "This guy did a fire station for us. The entrance is—what? how do you describe it?—a white enamel with black spots. Dalmatians! It's great!"

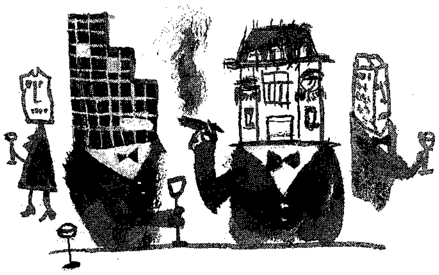
Mr. Venturi to us: "Well, children should like it."

Mr. Eisner: "Now he's going to do a gas station for us."

Mr. Venturi: "Of course, our firm has also been doing work for Harvard, Yale, and Princeton."

Mr. Eisner: "Anybody can make Harvard, Yale, and Princeton look nice. *He* can really do gas stations!"

It was time for speeches and dinner. The speeches started during the antipasto, continued through the osso buco, and were so verbose that everyone kept remarking on their length until after the tiramisù (surrounded by meringues shaped like the Roman Colosseum) had been polished off. The speakers included Donna Hanover Giuliani, who talked about Andrew Giuliani's taste in movies; Mayor Francesco Rutelli of Rome, who is thirty-nine and looks like a matinée idol; and Mr. Eisner, who, it turned out, was happy not only with Mr. Venturi's postmodernism but with at least one notable example of the high modernism that postmodernism tossed its bricks at. "When I was growing up, in New York City, my grandmother lived in the Park Lane Hotel," Mr. Eisner said. "I remember she was monstrously unhappy that part of Park Avenue was being torn down to make way for the Seagram Building. As I watched the Seagram Building go up, I was unbelievably amazed to find how much I preferred it to my grandmother." ♦

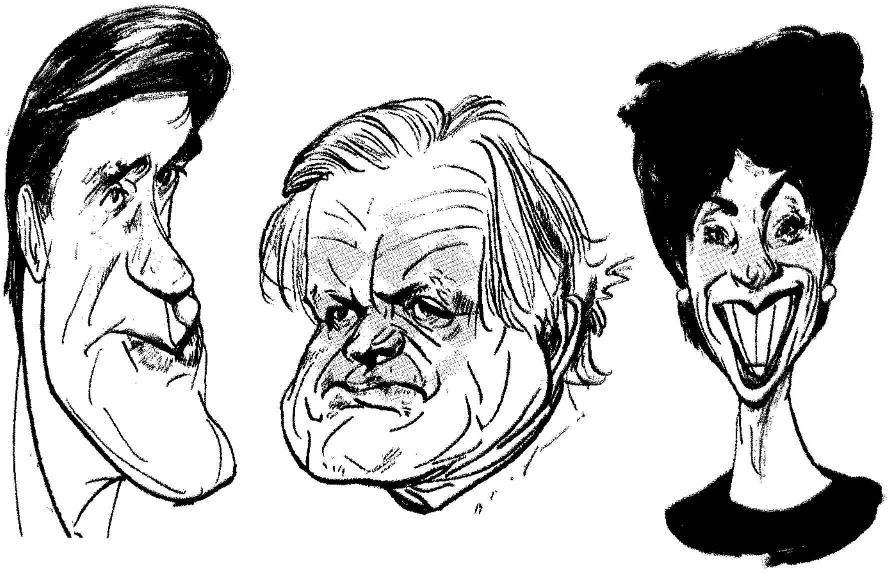


THE POLITICAL SCENE

WE'RE NOT IN CAMELOT ANYMORE

With Bill Clinton in the White House, this should be Ted Kennedy's moment. But in the Senate campaign the past is finally catching up with him.

BY PETER J. BOYER



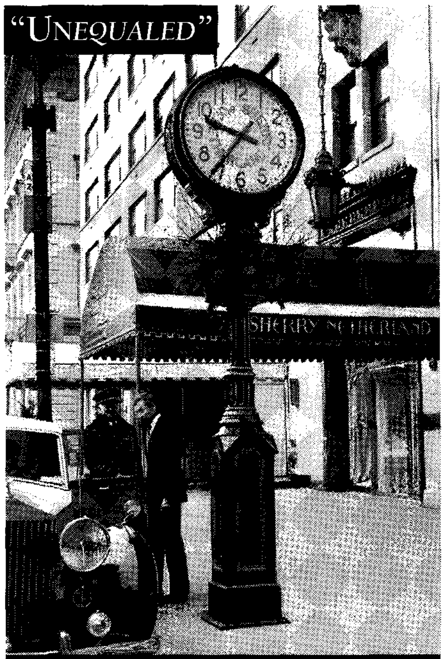
The Senator is facing his first real threat from the Republicans, including millionaire Mitt Romney and Janet Jeghelian, a former Kennedy-family stalwart.

STEVE BRODNER

“EVER since I first ran,” Ted Kennedy was saying, “they've always made something else the issue. I mean, ‘You're the brother of the President'—that's the issue. Or it's some other kind of issue. And if they're able to do it, so be it. I don't think they will, because I don't intend to let them.” The subject was Kennedy's try for his seventh election to the United States Senate, and I had asked whether he expected his personal controversies to be injected into the campaign. The “they” to whom Kennedy referred were the still mostly faceless Republicans scrambling for a chance to take him on this fall. That there are Republicans eager to challenge Kennedy is itself a telling development. When his seat last came up, in 1988, no credible Republican candidate even wanted to try for it until a month before the filing deadline; then a Party official named Joe Malone was drafted into the lost cause. Malone characterizes his candidacy as that of “a sacrificial lamb,” and slaughter was indeed his fate.

Kennedy and I were sitting in a small storefront hair salon in Lexington, Massachusetts, on Patriots' Day, in April—a state holiday celebrating the anniversary of “the shot heard round the world.” His wife, Victoria, was across the room, having politely accepted a stylist's offer to comb her hair before she rode with the Senator in the town parade. The Senator did not look well. His face was puffy and flushed, and his blue eyes were rheumy and red-rimmed. His hands shook noticeably, and during our conversation he kept them tucked under his arms, which were folded across his chest. When he spoke, it was like verbal sketching, a bit wobbily drawn. “You know, we're prepared, having been in politics some period of time, prepared to deal with, ah, matters that are raised, related to now or in the past. I mean, one has to be, recognize that as being in the whole political, whole political process. But I think people are interested, quite frankly, I find, around the state, they're interested in where you are now, what you're doing, what your involvement is, and what you really hope to be able to achieve in the past—I mean, in the future.”

The past, though, has framed the present moment for Kennedy, and it is one that he cannot welcome: for the first



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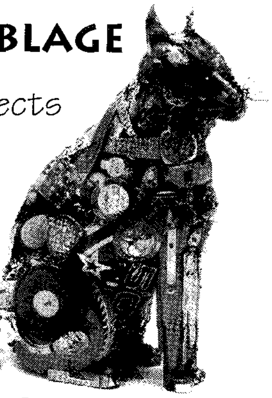

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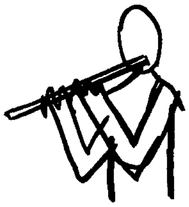
time in thirty years, Ted Kennedy is campaigning in a Senate race whose outcome is not already certain. The source of doubt is not the prospect of a formidable opponent—that is yet to be seen—but the swell of antipathy that followed the 1991 Palm Beach rape trial of William Kennedy Smith, when a statewide poll showed that two-thirds of Massachusetts voters thought their senior senator should be replaced. Kennedy's standing has since rebounded, but there are indications that the Palm Beach incident and other episodes may have tightened the slack that Massachusetts voters have always granted him. (They gave him sixty-two per cent of the vote the year after Chappaquiddick.) When Kennedy is in a crowd, people still smile and wave and crane their necks for a better look, as they did that day in Lexington and, earlier, in Concord, but then they go tell a pollster they think it's time for a new senator. That explains such weird poll results as those published on May 4th by the McCormack Institute, at the University of Massachusetts, which Lou DiNatale, who directed the poll, termed "shocking." While sixty per cent of the voters questioned viewed Kennedy favorably, sixty-two per cent said that it was time for a change, and only thirty-four per cent thought that Kennedy deserved another term in office. "The message is essentially that, for the first time in his career, Ted Kennedy is vulnerable," DiNatale observes.

The risk for Kennedy is that, deprived of mystique, he will become a mere politician, subject to the whiplash forces of public mood, such as the anti-incumbency urge. Kennedy must also reckon with factors that, though they are not directly related to his campaign, may nevertheless have an impact upon it, chiefly the disarray in the state's Democratic Party and the popularity of its Republican governor, William Weld—a Kennedy antithesis. Alert to the dangers, Kennedy's camp has the candidate campaigning hard, for the first time in twelve years. He has been traversing the country in search of campaign funds, and, seven months before the election, he has already raised more money—about five million dollars—than any other senator running for reëlection, and more than he spent in the whole of his last campaign. Kennedy is still the favorite to win in November, but en route to Election Day he will have to jump through some unfamiliar hoops; campaign insiders indicate that he will try to position himself as a champion of the middle class and, after thirty years in the Senate, as an agent of change.



THE Kennedy reëlection headquarters in Boston are decorated in typical campaign style: rented desks; telephone lines snaking across the floors; maps and posters and Kennedy bumper stickers tacked to the walls. But one item, framed and hung on a wall in the corner office, plainly holds special significance. It is the *Time* cover portrait of Bobby Kennedy from October, 1960, which accompanied an article describing Bobby's key role in securing the Democratic Presidential nomination for J.F.K. Bobby had been the horsewhip in Jack's campaign, relentless and tough, his fierce drive as central to the developing legend as was Jack's ironic wit. The portrait of Bobby, with his own handwritten delegate tallies from 1960 superimposed alongside, now overlooks the desk of Bobby's son Michael, who is managing his Uncle Ted's campaign.

The enlistment of relatives is a Kennedy campaign tradition rooted in the patriarch Joseph Kennedy's calculation that no one can better serve a Kennedy than a Kennedy. "Trust has a lot to do with it," says Michael, who is following his brother Joe (a fourth-term congressman), his sister Kathleen, and his cousins Ted, Jr., and Kara in the role of Ted Kennedy's campaign manager.

Now thirty-six, Michael has waited his turn, having worked for Joe at Citizens Energy, a business enterprise that Joe started in order to bring low-cost heating fuel to the disadvantaged, and then on Joe's congressional campaigns. The sixth of Bobby and Ethel Kennedy's eleven children, Michael has the Kennedy profile and his father's nature—a head-down, straight-ahead doggedness, which suits his current role. He is as smooth with a labor-union leader in a morning television appearance as he is with an auditorium full of schoolchildren at the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., Catholic school after lunch, promising the kids early recess before stopping in the sacristy to pray. ("God love you, you're the image of your father," a nun tells him.) "I'm not sure that as a general proposition gene pools are the way to locate political talent," Bob Shrum, the Democratic political consultant and a longtime friend of the Kennedys, says, "but in this case they're a fairly reliable indicator." Michael is said to have been one of the steadier of Bobby and Ethel's brood—a distinguishing trait in what was often, after Bobby's death, a chaotic environment (sometimes Michael would answer the telephone by saying, "Confusion here"). He resisted the destructive distractions all too available to others of his generation, including his older brothers David (who died of a drug overdose in Palm Beach in 1984) and Bobby, Jr. (who forfeited the chance at a political career because of drug addiction), and, like his father, settled down early. He married Victoria Gifford (daughter of the former New York Giants great) when he was twenty-three, and started a family. A friend says, "With Michael, it was always the task, the task, the task."

The task that Michael now faces is, he knows, more formidable than it was when the others ran Uncle Ted's campaign. Not the least of his worries are the poll results showing that Ted Kennedy has lost his connection to Massachusetts voters. Of the 1988 election, Michael says, "We didn't have to put out that much of an effort, and we didn't spend that much on our media buying. And that means that the Senator hasn't touched base with the voters, asking them to vote and be part of a campaign for him, in twelve years, in reality. And that is several lifetimes, politically." In the interim, a new generation of voters has come of age, young people who did not experience the Kennedy mystique firsthand. "Young people don't have a personal memory of President Kennedy or my father, and don't know what all that means," Michael says. "And so someone who's thirty years old, certainly they get it from history books or something, but it doesn't have any real meaning for them, as it does for, say, people a bit older who lived through that period. That is an issue." In Michael's frequent role as campaign surrogate, his youth helps, as does the family juice: last month, he was able to persuade the actor Alec Baldwin to appear on Kennedy's behalf at several Boston college campuses—an effort that yielded fourteen hundred campaign volunteers.

But there are problems for Kennedy that hard work and organization alone may not solve, such as the fractured condition of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts. Massachusetts was perhaps the most reliably Democratic state in the Union during the last three decades, but the Commonwealth's electoral arithmetic was changed by the debacle of Michael Dukakis's tenure as governor. After his sound thumping by George Bush in the 1988 Presidential race, Dukakis returned to Massachusetts to find a populace in revolt; the "Massachusetts Miracle" that had been his Presidential theme proved a gossamer construct, and when the years of government growth collided with a devastating economic collapse in Massachusetts the state nearly went bankrupt. Loosed from their Democratic moorings, Massachusetts voters delivered to Republicans an uncustomary triumph in 1990, electing a Republican governor (Weld), lieutenant governor (Paul Cellucci), and treasurer (Joe Malone, who had been Kennedy's "sacrificial lamb" in 1988), and also sending two new Republican representatives to Washington. Governor Weld cut taxes and restored fiscal balance to the state, and his plan for welfare reform has animated the welfare debate in Washington. He has become easily the most popular statewide politician in Massachusetts, even gaining the public admiration of the former Democratic senator Paul Tsongas. In fact, Weld's standing with voters scared away potential heavyweight Democratic challengers (including Joe Kennedy) to his bid for reëlection this year, and he is deemed a possible Presidential candidate in 1996.

Against this background of political dissonance at home, the excitements of Ted Kennedy's private life once again crashed into the foreground. Tabloids recounted such Kennedy debaucheries as a tabletop consummation with a waitress and, at the chic La Brasserie in Washington, fornication with a blond lobbyist; a former top Kennedy aide wrote a book (which was attacked by Kennedy supporters) detailing the Senator's alleged appetite for women, drink, and cocaine; and magazines published a photograph of Kennedy in flagrante delicto aboard an open yacht in the Mediterranean. And then came the regrettable Easter weekend of 1991, a "traditional family weekend," as Kennedy later phrased it, that ended the following November in the lurid, nationally televised rape trial of his nephew William Kennedy Smith. Even a public that had customarily been generous in its judgment of Kennedy's private behavior seemed stunned by his role in that episode. By Kennedy's own account, the events of that Good Friday evening were initiated when he roused his sleeping nephew William and son Patrick at 11:30 P.M. to go and "have a few beers" at a Palm Beach pickup spot. Eight months later, as Kennedy family lawyers and detectives were laboring to discredit the alleged rape victim in a Palm Beach court, Ted Kennedy was among the panel of senators sitting as arbiters in the exploding national debate on sexual harassment.

WHEN Ted Kennedy came to know Janet Jeghelian, he was a thirty-year-old candidate for the United States Senate—John F. Kennedy's baby brother, brashly trying to win the new President's vacated seat, in his first try for elected office. Jeghelian, a passionate admirer of the Kennedy family, had a degree in physical therapy, and she was honored that she'd been chosen to work on the rehabilitation of Joseph P. Kennedy, the President's father, who had been crippled by a stroke. Six days a week, Jeghelian made the two-hour bus trip from Boston to Hyannis Port, where Secret Service agents would meet her and transport her to the Kennedy compound. There, she would knead the elder Kennedy's shrivelling muscles, stretch his legs in the pool, and minister to his pains. When the polling results showed Teddy the winner in that first, 1962 campaign, Jeghelian delighted in greeting him the next morning as "Mr. Senator." Now, with Kennedy beginning his seventh campaign, Jeghelian has devoted herself to ending his career.

Jeghelian, who went on to a broadcasting career and was a popular radio talk-show host in Boston for fifteen years, is one of several Republicans hoping to face Kennedy this fall. Her positions, which mostly reflect the mad-as-hell sensibilities of the talk-radio audience, offer rounded-off solutions to the perceived causes of social decay: crime ("We've got to get tough on crime"); welfare ("You cannot expect to hold your hands out and never have to give something back"); and overreliance upon government ("Since the Great Society . . . we

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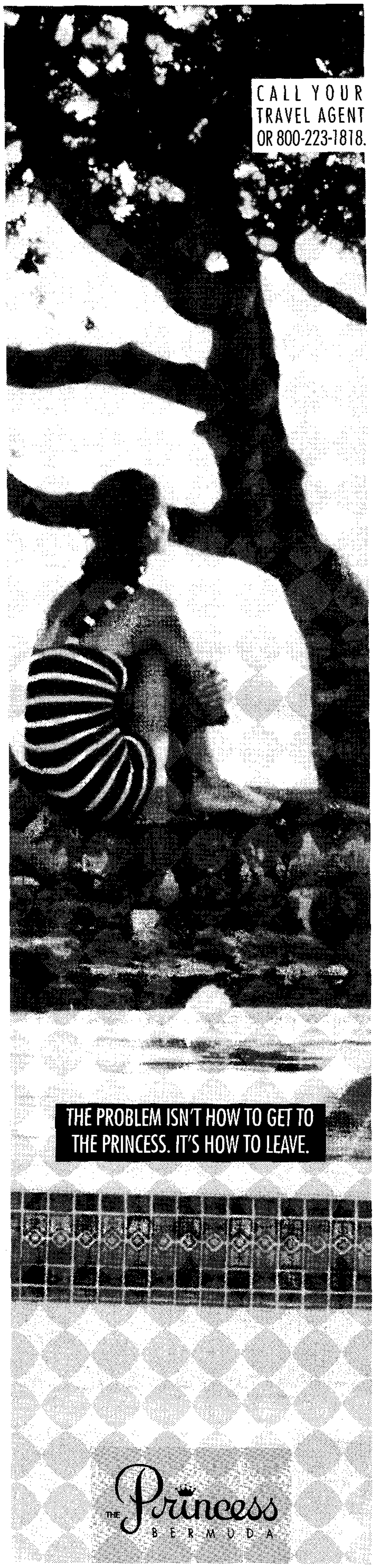
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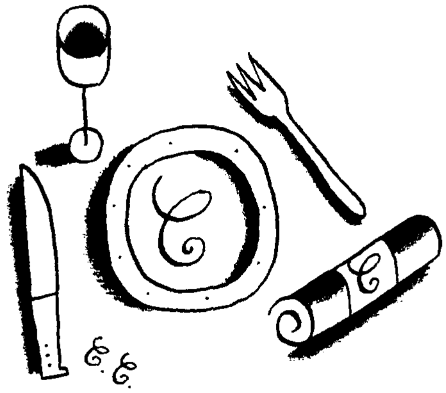
began to breed a generation of very weak people"). Jeghelian's candidacy is not one of new ideas, but a campaign of high concept, pinned on a central image she hopes will have visceral power—the picture of Ted Kennedy forced to slug it out with an underdog woman who is as strongly pro-choice as he is and has a working-class identity. "Janet is Ted Kennedy's worst nightmare," Georgia Gibbons, the Jeghelian campaign's finance chairman, says, somewhat hopefully.

Jeghelian's approach certainly has recent precedent, in the successful Year of the Woman senatorial campaigns of Washington's Patty ("Just a mom in tennis shoes") Murray; Carol Moseley-Braun, of Illinois; and Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, of California—all of whose candidacies were driven by indignation over the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas hearings. Not only was Kennedy a member of the all-white, all-male Judiciary Committee, the imagery of which inspired the Year of the Woman, but he was forced by his image problems to adopt the posture of near-mute bystander. When, toward the end of the hearings, he finally sought to exert his influence with Professor Hill's Republican interrogators, crying "Shame!" over and over, Senator Arlen Specter was easily able to score with the riposte "We do not need characterizations like 'shame' from the Senator from Massachusetts."

The Hill-Thomas hearings were just one indication of how Kennedy's own controversial episodes have neutralized his long, stout championship of feminist causes. Another hint of his vulnerability regarding women came last fall, when his campaign flew the nation's five Democratic women senators to Boston for a Kennedy fund-raiser, their first joint appearance in such a role. On one level, it was a natural political call: Kennedy had fought for abortion rights, had battled for the passage of Title IX, and had shepherded through the Senate legislation on women's health issues, such as the funding of breast-cancer research. But the presence of the four freshman women senators and of Barbara Mikulski, the Maryland Democrat—whose clench-fisted, "I am outraged!" posture personified women's impatience with the male power structure—at a thousand-dollar-a-plate luncheon for the Ted Kennedy of Palm Beach invited a certain skepticism. Their praise of Kennedy, given the simultaneous roles he had played on the Judiciary Committee and as a witness for a very aggressive defense in Palm Beach, seemed unintentionally ironic, if not ridiculous—especially Mikulski's assessment of Kennedy as "one of the great Galahads of the United States Senate." (This prompted the Boston *Herald's* Jeff Jacoby to remind readers, "Galahad was the *chaste* knight at the Round Table.")

Several Kennedy partisans admit that running against a woman would create special problems for Kennedy. "There's no question that a woman presents some challenges," John Sasso, a Democratic strategist who advises the Kennedy campaign, says. "Just ask George Bush. He had a lot of trouble coming to grips with Geraldine Ferraro in '84. . . . It's not easy with a strong woman who is very direct and aggressive." Jeghelian's campaign is nothing if not direct, and it is forced to be aggressive. Her name recognition from radio has made her the front-runner so far, but she lacks money and is obliged to compensate with imagination and a guerrilla flair. Her campaign manager, a former reporter named Gene Hartigan, coined the bumper-sticker slogan that has become a Republican collector's item even outside Massachusetts: "Say Goodnight, Ted." But novelty can carry a campaign only so far, and it is clear that Jeghelian needs better discipline if she is to survive even the Republican selection process. Last week, her campaign had to scramble furiously to meet the deadline for gathering enough signatures to get her name on the ballot—an unpardonable organizational lapse.

Jeghelian's immediate obstacle, however, is not Ted Kennedy but Mitt Romney, one of two millionaires running for the Republican nomination. (The other is a businessman named John Lakian, whose last try at statewide politics ended abruptly when the Boston *Globe* reported that several features of his résumé were fabrications.) Romney, forty-seven, is a newcomer to politics, but he conveys a public forcefulness and an instinct for backstage maneuvering that suggest an insider's pedigree, which he has. He is the son of George Romney, the former Michigan governor and Presidential candidate, who, at eighty-six, has been delighting Republican town meetings (and, plainly, himself as well) with a fairly heavy campaign schedule on behalf of his son. Mitt Romney, who has lived in Boston since 1971, had a lot of ground to make up with Republicans in the state, most of whom had never heard of him until he announced his candidacy, and he still has low name-recognition with the general public. When I asked the elder Romney about this, outside a town meeting in Wayland, Massachusetts, he said that Mitt was following his own example: George Romney had made a success in business, being credited with rescuing the also-ran American Motors Company in the nineteen-fifties, before turning to politics and winning his first race, to become governor. He likened his son's position to his own when he took on the Big Three automakers with the Nash Rambler—a clunky but fuel-efficient conveyance that won no points among the James Dean set but was a hit on Main Street. "It was different," he said. "Our toughest job, aside from the product itself, was to convince people that they ought to pay attention to it. The way I did that was to talk about the Big Three cars as gas-guzzling dinosaurs. Then we created advertising that was new. Now, that's what Mitt's going to do in this campaign, you wait and see."



The Rambler comparison is apt. Mitt Romney, like four generations of Romneys before him, is a devout Mormon, which is to say that he does not smoke or drink and is a conspicuously devoted family man. (His wife, Ann, who suggested that he become a candidate, accompanies him on most engagements.) There is about him a sort of teacher's-pet quality—an air of someone accustomed to winning. As a young man, he was gung-ho about Vietnam but was granted a deferment so that he could serve his missionary obligation to his church. His mission assignment: France. When he came back (by which time both he and his father had turned against the war), college deferments had ended, so his name went into the draft lottery with everyone else's. Romney drew No. 300, a guaranteed out. After getting his law and business degrees at Harvard, he showed a keen eye for management troubleshooting and for investment, and made himself rich. ("I haven't inherited anything from my father but my name—yet," he jokes.) Handsome and assured, he conveys a sense of expectation as he seeks the Republican nomination; indeed, he is just the sort of candidate that Massachusetts Republicans like to put forward against Kennedy—even if Kennedy regularly thrashes his opponent—and even Romney's detractors acknowledge that he somehow seems the senator type. "He looks like a candidate," Gibbons, Jeghelian's finance chairman, says. "He's tall and handsome, and he's rich, and he wears a blazer and chinos and an Hermès tie. And his wife looks like Barbie, and they have five sons that are gorgeous, and one of them is named Tagg. I'm telling you, he's what the insider Republican Old Guard likes. But can he beat Kennedy?"

Romney and Jeghelian are actually quite close on the issues—pro-choice, for the death penalty, against Kennedy-style liberal policies—although Romney may have some trouble on account of his religion, which is an exotic faith in Massachusetts. There have already been whispering campaigns to the effect that his positions on abortion and on gays in the military (he supports Clinton's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy) are not credible, because abortion and homosexuality are condemned by his church, of which he was, until recently, a high-ranking lay official.

Jeghelian hopes to separate herself from Romney by driving home the central theme of her campaign—the woman-versus-Goliath image; Romney believes he will prevail because he has deep pockets, and means to reach into them. Both candidates are hampered by the timing of the Republican primary: it is not held until September, and so leaves the nominee just six weeks to campaign against Kennedy. That, Romney says, makes money crucial. He plans to spend as much as eight million dollars on his campaign, even if it means spending his own money. "I will not let the airwaves be dead," he says. "I mean, I'm not going to get this Party's nomination and then not be there at the end."

WHAT may be, win or lose, the last campaign of the last Kennedy brother really began in October of 1991, when it seemed that Ted Kennedy had finally bottomed out. The Easter-weekend scandal in Palm Beach had hurt his public standing deeply, and, as the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas spectacle subsequently showed, his private life had finally become an obstacle to his public performance; even Chappaquiddick hadn't done that. For months, according to friends, Kennedy had sensed that he somehow needed to come to grips with himself, and he made it plain that he was open to advice. One person who had been willing to give it was Orrin Hatch, the conservative Republican from Utah, who serves on Kennedy's Labor and Human Resources Committee and is, incongruously, one of Kennedy's closest friends in the Senate. Meeting in Hatch's office several weeks after Palm Beach, the two senators had discussed Kennedy's crisis, and Hatch laid it out. "You know what you really need to do, don't you?" he said. "You've got to stop drinking." This conversation, which was recorded by Hatch and is reported in a new book about the Utah Senator, concluded when Kennedy lowered his head and said, "I know."

Kennedy did not quit drinking, but he did respond to a growing consensus in his circle that he needed to do something, preferably something public, to address the hardening impression of him as a man out of control. Kennedy had mostly kept silent about his difficulties, but by fall he was ready for a large gesture. "He felt he wanted to say something to people in Massachusetts," Bob Shrum recalls. "He'd been through all the months of real pain and the attacks, and had said virtually nothing. Speaking out was something he wanted to do. It was a question of how to do it." The answer turned out to be an obvious one, provided by the calendar. On October 12-15, 1991, the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas disputation was scheduled for televised hearings, and on October 31st, jury selection was to begin in the William Kennedy Smith trial. Kennedy was scheduled to speak at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard University, on Octo-

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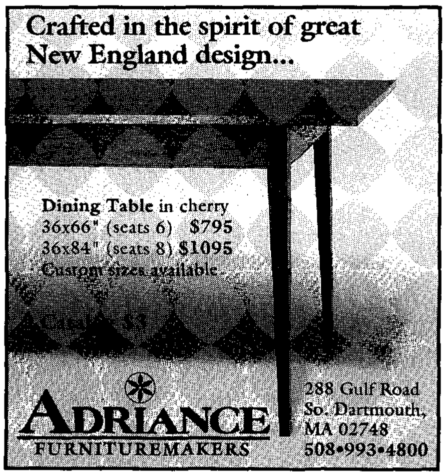

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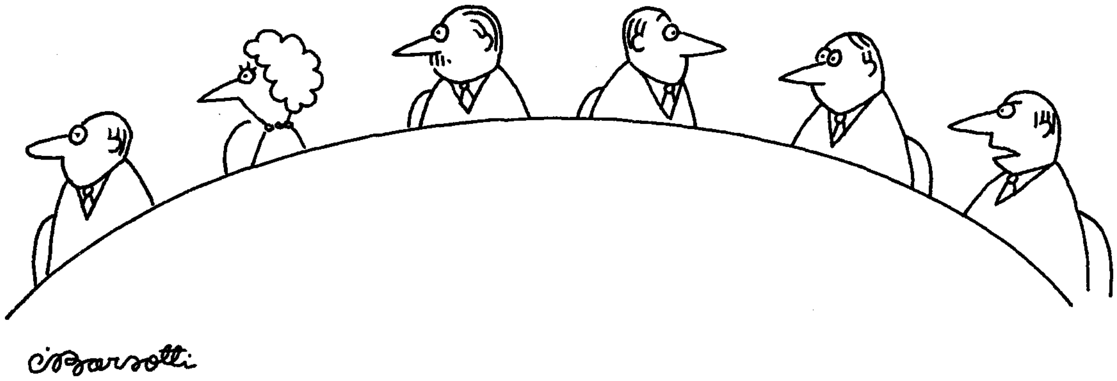


"We're looking toward the Pacific Rim, Greenfield. What the hell are you doing?"

ber 25th. That would be his chance to claim redemption.

His address, which was televised, was written by Shrum and a top Kennedy legislative aide, Carey Parker (with Kennedy himself contributing some key passages). Shrum and Parker had collaborated before, most notably on Kennedy's 1980 speech before the Democratic National Convention, which chose Jimmy Carter over him as its nominee. That speech, which was meant to be a concession—acknowledgment that this Kennedy could never be President—had actually served as a challenge to the Party, and a rousing inaugural to the greatness that Kennedy hoped would crown his Senate career. "For me, a few hours ago, this campaign came to an end," he had told the rapt crowd. "For all those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die." It was his greatest public performance. But now, at Harvard, he had lost not just a campaign but public confidence, and his purpose was contrition. "I am painfully aware," Kennedy told the audience, "that the criticism directed at me in recent months involves far more than honest disagreement with my positions or the usual criticism from the far right. It also involves the disappointment of friends and many others who rely on me to fight the good fight. . . . I recognize my own shortcomings—the faults in the conduct of my private life. I realize that I alone am responsible for them and I am the one who must confront them."

Kennedy did not specifically address his shortcomings, or the faults in his conduct, and there was a defiant tone in his vow to "continue to fight the good fight." Jimmy Breslin excoriated the Senator in a column that equated him with "the classic town drunk" who promises his wife he will never leave her. "It was a speech most other drinkers make with a borrowed quarter," Breslin wrote. Kennedy had, of course, offered such apologies before. In 1962, during his first run for office, reporters discovered that as a freshman at Harvard, in 1951, he had been expelled for cheating: he had been caught arranging for another student to take a Spanish exam for him. "What I did was wrong," Kennedy said in his public statement about the cheating, eleven years later. "I have regretted it ever since." Twenty-five years ago this summer, after Mary Jo Kopechne died, trapped inside Ted Kennedy's car in Pocha Pond on Chappaquiddick Island, he gave a television address in which he raised the possibility of resigning his seat in the Senate. "No words on my part can possibly explain the terrible pain and suffering I feel over this tragic accident," he said, speaking from his father's house in Hyannis Port.

In 1980, Kennedy's friend Tip O'Neill told him that he could never be President, because of "the morality issue," and after Palm Beach there was serious question whether he could continue in the Senate. He seemed a man whose life had long ago become overfull of incident, too eventful, yet the incidents and events never ceased. His speech at Harvard was meant to be the beginning of his public rehabilitation. He went on a diet (and eventually fell off) and resolved to be punctual for committee meetings. And then, in July of 1992, Victoria Reggie, a divorced mother of two and a longtime friend of the Kennedy family, became the centerpiece of Ted Kennedy's rehabilitation by marrying him.

Among those close to Kennedy and those taking part in his campaign, Vicki Reggie Kennedy is often referred to as "the asset," and one meeting with her explains why. She is attractive, gracious, and smart, and her presence beside Kennedy inspires approval even among those in Massachusetts who were fond of Joan Kennedy, from whom Ted was divorced in 1980. Vicki Kennedy, wearing a huge sapphire surrounded by diamonds on her wedding finger, eagerly wades into a crowd to shake hands and smile at the stories—often about other Kennedys—that her husband's constituents have to tell. She comes from Crowley, Louisiana, the heart of Cajun country, where hardball politics is served up with a youngster's first bowl of filé gumbo. She knows, too, how to smile in the face of scandal; her father, a judge who was helpful in Jack Kennedy's Presidential campaign, was convicted of bank fraud three months after her wedding.

For Kennedy, her presence is a gift. Alone on the campaign trail, without Vicki, Kennedy might seem nothing but spectacle, all bloat and tremor; with her, one senses a flash of new energy. "It's obvious that Vicki's made an enormous difference in my life," he told me that day in Lexington. She has "brought a great sense of happiness, inner kinds of serenity, and a sense of joy and optimism and hope," he said. "And that's obviously affected me very deeply personally, and, I think, my own relationship with family and friends, and I'm sure in terms of my effectiveness as a member of the Senate." While that is more or less his standard statement about his wife, it rings true. He is said to be truly fond of Victoria's children, who are eleven and eight. She cooks for him, and is tenderly attentive (slipping him a tissue, for example, to dab at a razor nick before he works a crowd).

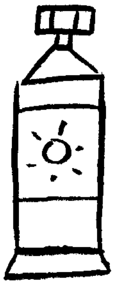
"Vicki is a major asset to this campaign," Michael Kennedy says, "and I want her to be as visible as possible." Her visibility may, in fact, be her greatest contribution to her husband's campaign. She is a direct answer to the character issue, living evidence that Kennedy's raucous bachelorhood is over.

KENNEDY'S people maintain that the election will be about issues only, and that the people of Massachusetts aren't interested in the Senator's private difficulties; however, the Kennedy camp has been worried enough about the issue to quiz focus groups on the subject.

There will be mention this summer of Mary Jo Kopechne's death, as the press inevitably focusses on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the three momentous events of the summer of 1969: the moon landing, the Manson killings, and Chappaquiddick. I asked Kennedy about this. "Sure," he said. "But, in a very real way, in terms of the kinds of losses I've had, those are the core kind of scars that are in my persona. And the resolutions and the commitments that I've made internally, in terms of dealing with those kinds of issues, I think they've been very real. And many of these other kinds of issues and questions, maybe that can be raised and maybe you wish you could be talking about other things, but, honestly, I think I've got the world to live for, with a wonderfully happy life, two magnificent additional young children. And I'm enjoying the work I'm doing in the Senate."

His work has been more productive, perhaps, than ever before, which is but a part of the bountiful irony of his life. For all his controversies, his stature is well beyond merely senatorial; during the years of Reagan and Bush, he was a kind of anti-President in the Senate, opposing the Gulf War, pushing abortion rights, often standing alone in his battles for the liberal cause. Kennedy's public identity as a roué denied him his expected course to the White House, but it also obscured his absolute mastery of the political process: Ted Kennedy is at bottom a brilliant Irish pol, who skillfully employs the sledgehammer or collegial accommodation as needed, and whose goals are achieved at an astonishingly high rate. His thirty-two years in the Senate rank him in seniority behind only Strom Thurmond, Robert Byrd, and Claiborne Pell. When Reagan was stacking the Supreme Court with conservatives, Kennedy insured a confirmation street brawl, declaring on the day of Robert Bork's nomination that "Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids." But more often Kennedy does his Senate work with a keen sense of that body's civil rhythms, painstakingly seeking bipartisan endorsement of his pet legislation, yielding at the edges to preserve the heart. Kennedy's staff is the best paid, and among the most highly regarded, on Capitol Hill. And even during the Bush years, especially in the "kinder and gentler" phase early on, Kennedy scored major successes, such as the Ryan White AIDS-CARE Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

With the election of Clinton, Kennedy's own agenda was suddenly uncorked, and legislation came pouring forth from his Labor and Human Resources Committee. What's more, much of it was signed into law. His family-leave bill, vetoed by Bush, was the first piece of legislation signed by President Clinton. The President, whose own standing with Congress has been unsure, plainly needs Ted Kennedy, as was seen last week when Kennedy unveiled his own health-care plan, which is, in essence, the President's opening wager as the health-care poker game gets serious in Congress. Clinton needs to have something resembling a compromise on the table immediately, and Kennedy, who has been pushing for national health care since 1970, will get his bill out of committee by the end of the month. He knows the game; he gives, and he takes, too. When the Clinton Administration decided to allow the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, to visit the United States, galling the British, it was largely because Ted Kennedy wanted it.



"I think that President Clinton is the best thing that's happened to Senator Kennedy politically in a long time," Sasso, the Kennedy adviser, says. "I think that he is pivoting off Clinton's energy and Clinton's commitment to issues that he's been working on forever. These issues . . . have sort of come to be center stage because of this activist President, and have given him a chance to recharge his own batteries."

And Kennedy needs President Clinton, who is hugely popular in Massachusetts, where, in the spectrum of Democrats, he is considered a true moderate. While Republicans mean to tar Kennedy with his own liberal brush, Kennedy's campaign hopes that the Senator's association with Clinton will lend him some identity as a moderate. (The Kennedy-Clinton alliance is enhanced by a shared dilemma: both are policy activists whose political success depends partly on diverting public focus away from character issues.)

"You know, there aren't too many people in this state without an opinion on my uncle," Michael Kennedy says. "And that's both positive and negative. So the opponent starts off with a fairly significant portion of the electorate. No matter what we do in terms of resource expenditure, you're not going to eat away into that. So you are targeting that middle territory, going to economics, the middle class. That's what we'll be touching on, in our health care and everything else, because of his efforts on behalf of middle-class working families. Certainly there is a great desire for change, and that's what President Clinton is all about. And what I see is a hopefulness that the President can make that change happen. And there's nobody who's going to be able to help that process along better than Ted Kennedy."

In the end, Kennedy being Kennedy in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a formidable enough proposition for the Republicans, as Joe Malone can attest. "I think the most difficult part of it is the legacy of Bobby and Jack and the love for Rose Kennedy," Malone says. He remembers that when he was at a fund-raising event on the Sunday before the 1988 election, working the room for money to pay off the debt he'd incurred in his losing cause, someone told him to take a look at a documentary that was playing on one of the local television stations. "It was a half-hour show that covered everything from Jack's war record to his funeral, and everything else," Malone says. "I don't know if the timing was just a coincidence, but at the time I felt, Here I am, killing myself to get a thirty-second ad on, and the ad costs five thousand dollars, and here he's got a thirty-minute ad, in effect, for free. So that comes to mind when I think about running against Ted Kennedy." ♦

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ANNALS OF LAW

CAPONE'S REVENGE

How far can a prosecutor go to secure crucial testimony from plea bargainers? Bill Hogan's case will be the test.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

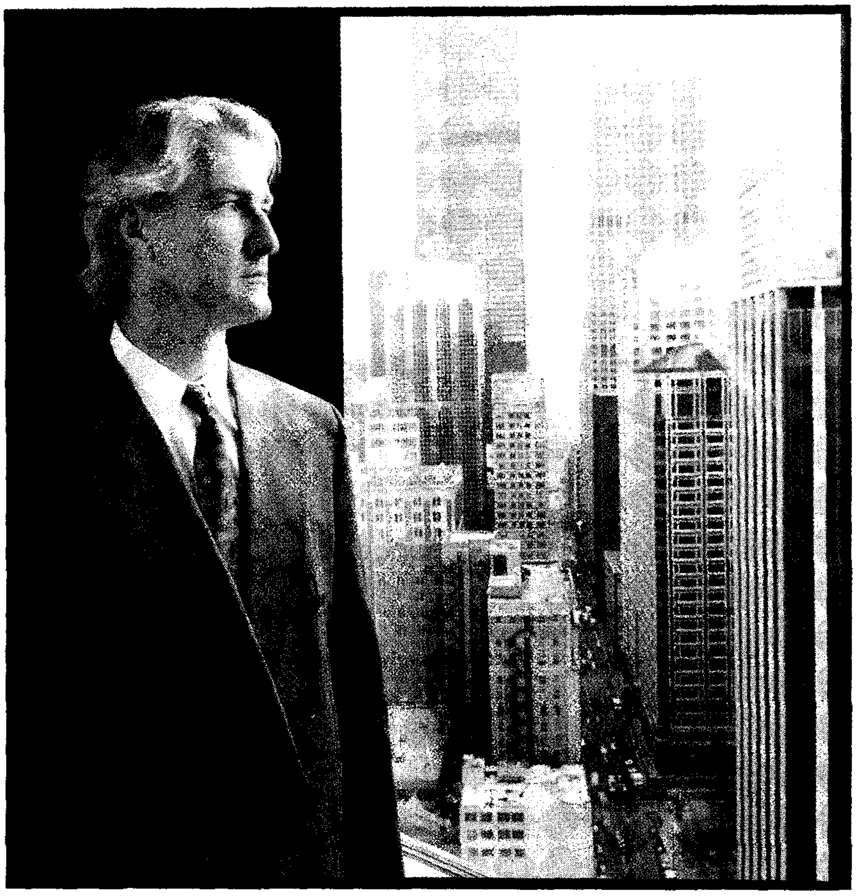
ONE by one, this winter and spring, the members of the El Rukn street gang have been returning to federal court in Chicago, going back to the courtrooms where, in a wave of prosecutions that started in 1989, their long reign over the city's South Side was emphatically brought to an end. For nearly three decades, the El Rukn gang—which one judge called "the most infamous gang of organized criminals that Chicago has seen since the days of Al Capone"—had terrorized the city's black neighborhoods. The El Rukns (who were once known as the Blackstone Rangers) murdered one another and their rivals, and they murdered witnesses and the relatives of witnesses to keep the law at bay. They established nationwide networks for dealing in heroin, cocaine, and marijuana. They maintained sway over their turf with extortion and, when necessary, bribery of public officials, including a judge.

Prosecutors in Chicago had chased the El Rukns for years, and one man finally brought them down—William R. Hogan, Jr., an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. Hogan made the El Rukn case by working hard—in one sixteen-month stretch he took just ten days off—and by assembling a comparably dedicated team of a few junior colleagues, Chicago police officers, and federal agents. But Hogan's greatest gift may have been a more specialized skill. He demonstrated a remarkable ability to recruit El Rukns to his side—to "flip" them, as prosecutors put it. All Hogan's El Rukn trials featured, at their center, gang members who entered into plea bargains and then testified against their former colleagues. The strategy was a brilliant success. By late 1992, Hogan's investigation had netted fifty-four convictions, with many defendants facing decades or life in prison. The Department of Justice viewed the case—and Hogan—as a model for the nation. Three months after Los Angeles was shaken by riots in April of 1992, Hogan was dispatched there with the assignment of organizing a comparable attack on that city's notorious Bloods and Crips.

These days, however, the El Rukns are returning to court for a reason that could scarcely have been imagined when Hogan was convicting them: they are being released. They are being released because of what may be one of the most significant cases of prosecutorial misconduct in the history of the Justice Department—prosecutorial misconduct by Bill Hogan. The convictions have evaporated because of accusations that Hogan's coöperating witnesses were given drugs and alcohol and allowed to have sex in prison and in the prosecutors' offices, and that the prosecutors condoned these practices and then covered them up. Unable to retry many of the cases, because its star witnesses have been revealed as liars and drug abusers, the United States Attorney's Office is now presenting defendants with astonishingly generous plea bargains. To name a few: C. D. Jackson, facing a life sentence for narcotics trafficking, was allowed in January to plead to the misdemeanor of marijuana possession and was released; and for Thomas Burnside, facing a hundred and sixty years, and Codell Griffin, facing eighty, both for narcotics conspiracy, the government moved to dismiss all charges.

The El Rukn case has brought to the fore a growing but largely unexplored peril of modern law enforcement. In recent years, prosecutors have shifted from charging individuals with isolated crimes to bringing down entire criminal organizations—Mafia families, Asian drug tongs, Jamaican posses, and urban street gangs. These cases, it turns out, are difficult, if not impossible, to try without the assistance of members of the organizations involved. But the alliance between prosecutors and turncoats—who are known, variously (and appropriately), as coöperators, accomplices, snitches, informants, flippers, rats, and scumbags—is fraught with hazards. Ironically, the greatest danger is not that what seem to be polar opposites—prosecutors and criminals—might never find a way to work together. Rather, it is just the reverse—that the good guys and the bad guys may fall in love.

The El Rukn cases have turned into a tragedy for the city of Chicago, for an eminent United States Attorney's Office, and, most especially, for Bill Hogan. As a result of findings by the judges trying the cases, and notwithstanding a stellar record, Hogan was placed on paid administrative leave last July and made the subject of an investigation by the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility, or O.P.R. For the past ten months, this consummate investigator has looked on as his colleagues, his targets, and even his ex-wife have been summoned in the course of the O.P.R. probe. For ten months, he has not been allowed to work in the office that was all but his permanent residence for the previous eight years. Yet Hogan's ordeal may be only beginning. Later this month, when O.P.R. is expected to make its final report to Attorney General Janet Reno, Hogan will learn whether he is to be cleared, disciplined, fired, or even, potentially, prosecuted as a criminal himself for his role in the El Rukn case.



Hogan was a hero when he put away Chicago's El Rukn gang—but then his case fell apart. Now the Justice Department will decide how untouchable he was. (*Photograph by Eileen Travell.*)

THE United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois has long ranked among the most illustrious prosecutors' offices in the nation. Former United States Attorneys there include James R. Thompson, who was the governor of Illinois from 1977 to 1991; Samuel K. Skinner, a Cabinet member and the White House chief of staff for President George Bush; and Dan K. Webb, who conducted the Iran-Contra prosecution of John Poindexter. Indeed, one might argue that the Northern District is responsible for much of the public mythology surrounding American prosecutors. Eliot Ness made his tax-evasion case against Al Capone there, and Scott Turow, an Assistant United States Attorney there from 1978 to 1986, drew on his experiences to create the Kindle County district attorney's office of his novel "Presumed Innocent" and its sequels. Against the often sleazy world of Cook County politics, the Northern District stood for incorruptibility, competence, and prosecutorial panache.

In August of 1986, Bill Hogan, who was then a fairly junior Northern District prosecutor with a growing reputation, was invited to a conference of prosecutors in New Haven. Hogan learned that federal agents in New England believed that a drug ring there was laundering its profits through fast-food restaurants that were owned by a Chicago businessman named Noah Robinson. There was even a rumor in Robinson's home town, Greenville, South Carolina, that he had commissioned a hit team from the Blackstone Rangers to kill one Leroy (Hambone) Barber. The news piqued Hogan's interest. Robinson had long drawn attention in the Northern District because he was rich, flamboyant, and shady—and because he was Jesse Jackson's half brother.

Hogan thought the Barber murder might be the wedge that allowed the Northern District to take on the gang, now known as the El Rukns, once and for all. (El Rukn is a corner of an Islamic shrine in Mecca.) An earlier investigation had resulted in the conviction of the gang's leader, Jeff Fort, but Hogan knew that Fort's organization was still thriving on the street. Leftover wiretaps from the Fort investigation were an enormous potential resource, and Hogan assigned a paralegal named Corinda Luchetta to catalogue hundreds of hours' worth of tapes and parcel them out to thirty secretaries to make transcripts. But because Fort had devised a code that was so elaborate that it practically amounted to a separate language, what Hogan really needed was a flipper—someone who could translate the gibberish on the tapes.

His big break came on July 11, 1988, when Chicago police picked up an El Rukn general named Henry Leon Harris in a rooming house and told him he was going to be charged in connection with the Barber murder in South Carolina. By the time the squad car reached the station house, Harris had confessed to his own role and had told the officers

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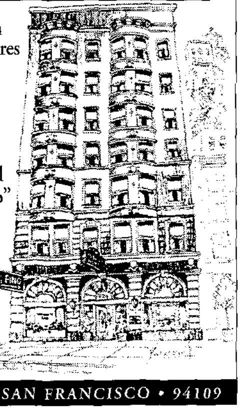

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that Fort and Robinson had indeed ordered the hit. Hogan had his flipper.

This past February, I wrote to Henry Harris at the witness-protection unit of the latest of the maximum-security prisons where he has lived for the past six years. In the weeks since, he has telephoned me regularly. Harris, who is now thirty-four, told me that when he was thirteen, in his home town of Milwaukee, he joined the gang that became the El Rukns and rose through the ranks until he was named a general, in 1983, and placed in charge of the gang's far-flung narcotics operation. (His progress may have been accelerated when he married Jeff Fort's younger sister.) The reason he decided to coöperate with the prosecution could not have been clearer: Harris wrote in his notes just after he was arrested in connection with the conspiracy to murder Barber, "I'm looking at the hot chair as I write this."

Harris is a professional criminal, and he is also charming, witty, and a fine raconteur, who speaks with a mixture of regret and pride about his days with the El Rukns. "We were planning the international black crime syndicate," Harris told me on the phone one afternoon. "We pushed the button on people, on high people! There were people who were out to get former President Reagan. That's right—a couple of people were planning on killing Reagan." In his many hours with Hogan, Harris sometimes wrapped a towel around his neck, to create a persona he called "the Professor," and regaled Hogan with tales of the El Rukns' exploits. "Bill Hogan was a damned good guy," Harris said. "He had a lot of potential as a gang-crime prosecutor. It was, like, running through his blood to get these guys off the streets. Hogan was on a mission. I spent almost six or seven hours a day with Bill for three or four years. I was doing tapes, man, nothing but tapes—listening, transcribing hundreds of hours' worth."

The volume of tapes and documents was such that Hogan had to leave his office in the courthouse and set up Corinda Luchetta and the rest of his team in a suite of offices across South Dearborn Street, on the thirty-ninth floor of the Kluczynski Building. "Bill used to stop by his office at seven-thirty every morning, but he really worked in the Kluczynski," a former senior member of the United States Attorney's Office staff recalled. "Hogan had a space behind a combination lock where they had the run of the turf up there. That kind of stuff really matters. Day to day, they were not visible to anybody. They became a separate world." In that separate world, Harris was soon joined by several other El Rukns, who had also decided to flip: Harry Evans, a three-hundred-pound diabetic with chronic renal failure; Earl Hawkins, an El Rukn triggerman, who had received a death sentence from an Illinois state court; and Eugene Hunter, another admitted murderer. As Hogan learned what was on the tapes and mined his flippers' recollections, the scope of his case kept growing.

It grew to vast, virtually unprecedented size. On October 27, 1989, the federal grand jury that Hogan was supervising returned a pair of indictments—one of them was three hundred and five pages long and weighed almost four pounds—that charged Noah Robinson and sixty-four El Rukn members and associates with a panoply of crimes over a twenty-four-year period. In a news conference at the courthouse, United States Attorney Anton Valukas said that the indictments charged that "these defendants sought to obtain and maintain control of drug territories through a systematic process of murder, narcotics distribution, terrorism, robberies, extortions, intimidations, fraud, bribery, kidnapping, and obstruction of justice." The charges included twenty murders and seven attempted killings. Near the bottom of a front-page Chicago *Tribune* story announcing the indictment, it was noted that Valukas praised the work of Hogan, "who had spearheaded the three-year investigation."

BILL HOGAN has always had goals, and until the El Rukn cases unravelled around him he had methodically accomplished them. He was born forty-two years ago, the son of a businessman and a homemaker, and grew up in a small stucco house in the pleasant Chicago suburb of Winnetka. "Bill's the oldest of eight kids," a longtime friend of his, Mike O'Rourke, said recently. "What else do you need to know?" At Loyola Academy, he made the Chicago Catholic League's all-star football team as a center and a linebacker, and he was elected to the Torch Club honor society. Tall, blond, lean, and well-muscled, Hogan radiated laconic confidence. "Just before our senior prom, Bill banged up his knee and he was in the hospital," O'Rourke recalled. "A bunch of us just bagged the prom and spent the night keeping him company. People looked up to him, wanted to be around him."

Hogan won a football scholarship to Holy Cross, but he lost it when his knee gave out, and in 1970 he married his high-school sweetheart and returned home. Their first child, Sheila Jane, was born the next year. These detours might well have thrown a less focussed young man permanently off track. Without the scholarship, Hogan was forced to paint houses to pay his way through Loyola University night school, in Chicago. But even with the new financial burdens—a son, Billy, quickly followed—Hogan never faltered in articulating and acting upon a clear plan for his future. "We were in a bar called the P.M. Club one day, and Bill said to me, 'Mikey, tell me if you think I'm crazy, but I'm going to transfer to the University of Illinois, and then I'm going to go to law school,'" O'Rourke said. "He was under such pressure at that time, with the kids and money issues. But I knew he would do it. He's a guy who, once he sets his mind to something, he's absolutely tenacious, just relentless. Do not mess with Hogan." Hogan finished law school, as predicted, right on schedule.

Law school produced a new set of goals. At Loyola University School of Law, Hogan took a trial-practice class with several adjunct professors who had been Assistant United States Attorneys in Chicago. "He saw those guys and he just knew from then on what he wanted to do," his friend Alexander Vesselinovitch said. Shortly after law school, Hogan and Vesselinovitch became law clerks for Charles Kocoras, a newly appointed federal judge in Chicago, and the exposure to the rough-and-tumble of the courthouse only deepened Hogan's desire to be a prosecutor. "When we finished our clerkship, there were no openings in Chicago, so Bill said, 'Where can I be an A.U.S.A.?'" Vesselinovitch said. "It turned out there was an opening in Seattle." With his marriage unravelling, Hogan moved west.

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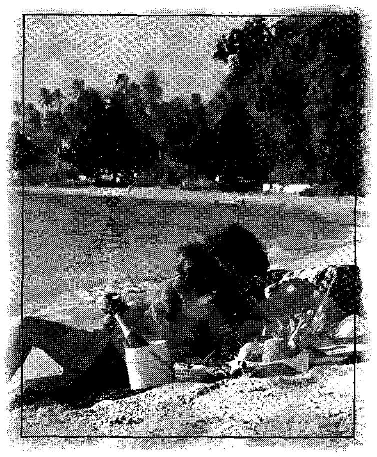

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winning a monthlong trial against members of the Bandidos motorcycle gang, Hogan was poised for long-term success in Seattle. But his goal remained Chicago. Part of the reason was personal. "A lot of guys, when they get divorced, they kind of forget about their kids, but Bill always stayed close to his," Hogan's friend Patrick Keeley said. "Seattle was never going to work for him, because he couldn't be near them." And there remained the passion to become an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of Illinois. After almost three years on the job in Seattle, Hogan finally obtained the job offer. He returned to Chicago and started work in the United States Attorney's Office in 1985. "It was the only job I ever wanted," Hogan said later.

Once again, he stood out. Because of his tenure in Seattle, he had more experience than most new Northern District Assistant United States Attorneys, so he was able to investigate and try complex cases from the start. His reputation in the Chicago legal community soared. "I told him for years that he could triple his income overnight by going into private practice," Keeley says. "But Bill's focus in life is to do what is right. Monetary and financial issues are so far down the list that they don't even become a factor. The guy is actually very much a liberal in his politics, and he saw these cases as an opportunity to help the community."

In Seattle, Hogan had married again, but the marriage ended quickly after he returned to Chicago. The focus of his life outside the courthouse remained his children. He was especially close to his daughter, a tall, blond, athletic kid much like him—a gymnast and soccer player and, in the summers, a lifeguard on Lake Michigan. In the fall of 1989, Sheila went away for her freshman year at the University of Illinois. The next March, she made a quick trip home to Chicago before making a spring-break pilgrimage to Florida. She mentioned to her mother that she had some bruises on one leg that did not seem to be healing. Her mother asked her to check with a doctor before she left. The diagnosis was acute leukemia. Sheila Hogan died three weeks later. She was eighteen. Almost all the lawyers at the United States Attorney's Office attended her funeral. "Everyone has a way of dealing with tragedy," Vesselinovitch said. "Bill worked. To say he threw himself into his work is an understatement. After Sheila's death, he worked his tail off in the El Rukn case. He thought the case could make a difference in the community that was beneficial." A year after his daughter's funeral, Bill Hogan's first El Rukn trial began.

IT was Hogan's headstrong, driven nature that allowed him to pull the El Rukn case together. It was this single-mindedness that likewise allowed him to carry on after Sheila's death. But as the trials in the El Rukn case began, that strength looked less like a positive attribute and more like a fatal flaw. Hogan's troubles had their start with the judges. "One of the first rules you learn as a lawyer—defense or prosecutor—is don't piss off the judge," Robert Loeb, a defense lawyer for one of the El Rukns, said. "Hogan made a cardinal mistake. He decided to go toe to toe with these judges."

First, Hogan alienated Judge Marvin E. Aspen by insisting that his major indictment, which charged thirty-seven defendants, be tried in a single megatrial. In a caustic opinion, Aspen severed the case into smaller trials. (There would ultimately be seven different El Rukn trials.) But Hogan's relationship with Aspen was downright cordial compared with his dealings with the other main judge in the El Rukn cases, James F. Holderman. Before being appointed to the bench, in 1985, at the age of thirty-eight, Holderman, like Hogan, had been a senior trial prosecutor in the Northern District. Warm and friendly off the bench, Holderman is subject to fits of rage in court that baffle even his admirers. Pacing behind his big leather chair, his chubby face growing red, Holderman can turn into a scary, almost irrational figure—as Bill Hogan witnessed again and again. Hogan's conflicts with Holderman began over small issues like scheduling, but they escalated until it was clear that the judge completely distrusted the prosecutor. "Mr. Hogan, at the end of the day yesterday, you insisted upon further reasons why I don't believe you," Holderman said during the trial. "You have provided a further reason. You don't do things when you say you are going to do them, you make statements that are presented as true when, in fact, they are not—"

"Judge, that's—" Hogan sputtered.

"You have stated that certain notes

exist, and then later you say they do not. . . . I could go on, but I will not, because I have wasted enough time dealing with your problems."

The run-ins with the judges did not prevent Hogan from winning his cases. He was working very hard. Because of the severances, there was sometimes more than one trial going on at the same time. One morning in October of 1991, as Hogan was giving his rebuttal summation in a trial before Judge Holderman, he learned that in another El Rukn case his colleagues had run out of evidence that they could present without him. So, after speaking to the jury for an entire morning in front of Holderman, Hogan headed for the other trial and spent the afternoon putting Earl Hawkins, one of the flippers, through his paces there.

Hogan was winning his cases because his flippers were brilliant, convincing witnesses. They had to be. There was precious little physical evidence or eyewitness testimony tying the defendants to the murders in these cases. The evidence consisted largely of the recollections of the coöperators Henry Harris and Harry Evans of conversations and events that stretched back nearly a quarter century. Hogan's summations amounted to passionate defenses of their veracity. They were criminals and drug abusers, he said, but they had reformed. In one case, Hogan picked up a catchphrase that a defense attorney named Marianne Jackson had used in her summation to disparage Harris and company.

"Miss Jackson talked about 'Who you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say.' I disagree with that," Hogan told the jury. "And I think that you should, too. What they said is as important as who they are. They were able to say what they did because of who they are. They were able to tell you about the things that they have done through twenty years, and the people that they did them with, because of who they are. And they were able to tell you about the defendants in this courtroom, because they did them with the defendants in this courtroom. There is an old proverb that says, 'Show me your friends, and I will show you who you are.' These men, the government witnesses who took the stand in this case, ladies and gentlemen, spent twenty years, day in, day out . . . sitting around with these three men in small

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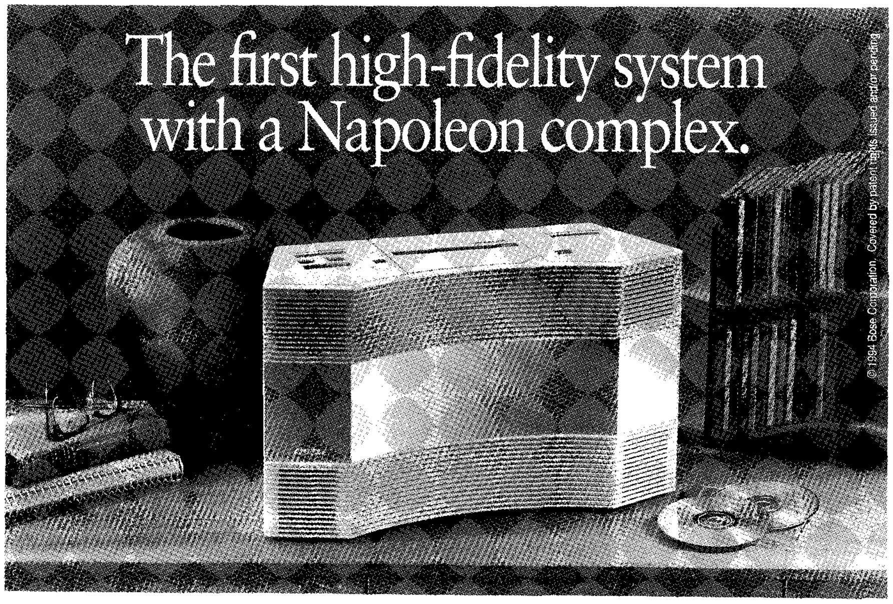

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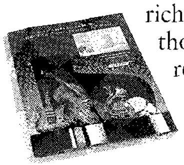

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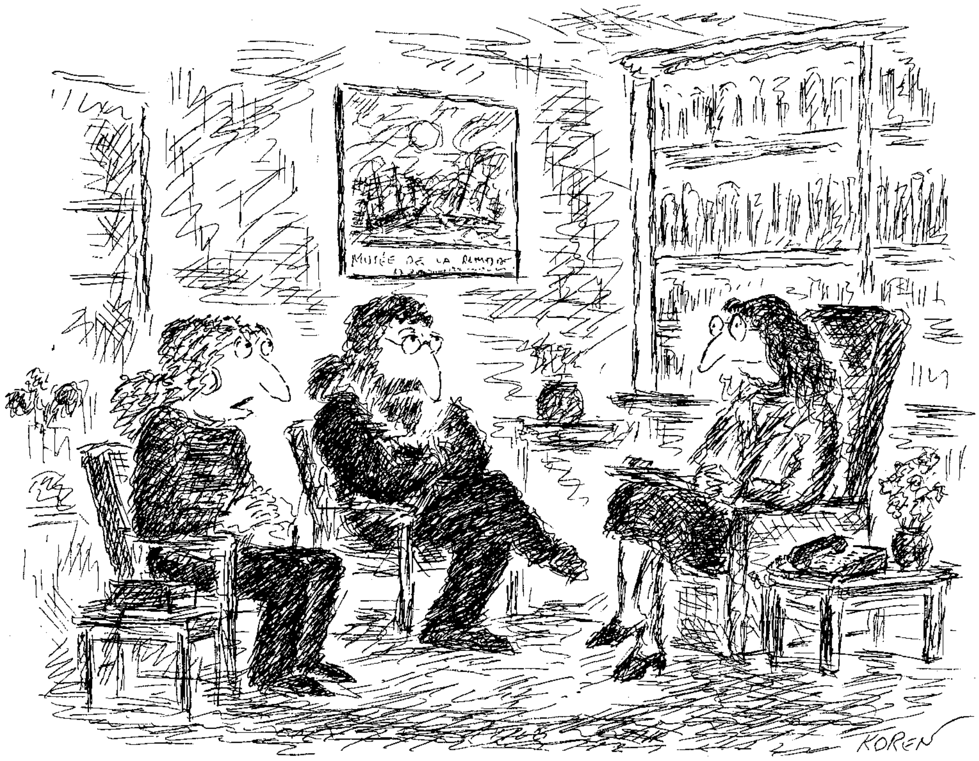
rooms . . . plotting murder, selling narcotics."

In the end, as Hogan told the jury, it was his own integrity, as much as that of his witnesses, that was on the line: "If you believe the arguments that you heard from these defense lawyers, you have to believe that the government, the federal government . . . the Assistant United States Attorneys who investigated this case for the last number of years . . . deliberately colluded with . . . Earl Hawkins, Harry Evans, Eugene Hunter, and Henry Harris in order to present this evidence to you." Hogan met the argument with a challenge. "If you believe that, which has been the tenor of these arguments for the last several hours here, then I do invite you to acquit these defendants. Because if you believe that, then they have no business being in this courtroom, because there is in fact something wrong, very desperately wrong, with the system of justice that has brought them to this courtroom." All the defendants were convicted.

DURING that trial, in 1991, Marianne Jackson heard a rumor that the El Rukn coöperating witnesses were still using narcotics in prison, so she issued a subpoena to the Metropolitan Correctional Center for Harris's and Evans's urinalysis records. One record, produced late in the trial, showed that each of the two witnesses had failed one test, in 1989. Their urine showed the presence of morphine, which can indicate heroin use. This was a potentially significant—even an explosive—piece of evidence. It showed that the government's top witnesses were not reformed drug abusers, as they had testified. Rather, it showed that they were still using drugs after their arrests, and thus cast doubt on their over-all credibility. Hogan, however, cleverly defused the importance of the failed drug tests. He called an official of the M.C.C. to testify that his records showed that neither Harris nor Evans had been disciplined for using drugs in prison. Because there was no record of discipline, the official stated, the use of morphine must have been medically authorized. The testimony was ambiguous, but the defense attorneys succeeded in persuading Judge Holderman to hold a post-trial hearing about the drug tests.

Just as that hearing was getting started, in the fall of 1992, what turned out to be the most significant event in the collapse of the El Rukn cases was taking place six hundred miles away, in a restaurant at the edge of Georgetown, in Washington, D.C. There, on the night of September 17, 1992, Lawrence Rosenthal, a former Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District, had a casual dinner at the Sequoia restaurant with Michael Shepard, a former colleague, who was on assignment in the capital. Shepard happened to mention Holderman's hearing, of which Rosenthal had been unaware. They're looking into whether the El Rukn witnesses used drugs, Shepard said.

Wait a second, Rosenthal replied. He knew something about that. It was back in 1989, just before Hogan indicted the case. Somehow, Rosenthal got a memo from the M.C.C. which showed that some El Rukn witnesses had failed their urine tests. Rosenthal said he walked the memo over to Hogan's office and mentioned it to him. As Rosenthal later testified, he told Hogan, "I thought this would be a real problem for the investigation and asked him . . . what he was going to do about it," and Hogan responded that "it was not a problem, it was nothing to worry about." Rosenthal recalled that he had repeated to Hogan that the memo would be a problem, that it would have to be turned over to the defense. And Rosenthal went on, "At that point it was clear to me from Mr. Hogan's demeanor that he was not interested in having any type of extended discussion on this, that he had discussed this all that he cared to, and the conversation ended."



"We love each other very much, and we concur on alcohol and coffee. But we're unable to come to an agreement on meat and fish."

This was a bombshell, and Shepard knew it. Since the Supreme Court's 1963 decision in Brady v. Maryland, prosecutors have had the duty to disclose to defense attorneys any exculpatory information about their clients. So-called Brady material also includes information that undermines the credibility of government witnesses, such as a failed drug test by an incarcerated coöperator. The Rosenthal-Hogan conversation established that Hogan had known about the failed drug test in 1989—before the indictments and the trials. The defense had learned of the failed drug tests only through a subpoena to the M.C.C. in 1991. The obvious implication was that Hogan had simply decided not to tell the defense about the failed tests, because such information would damage his case. Shepard alerted the

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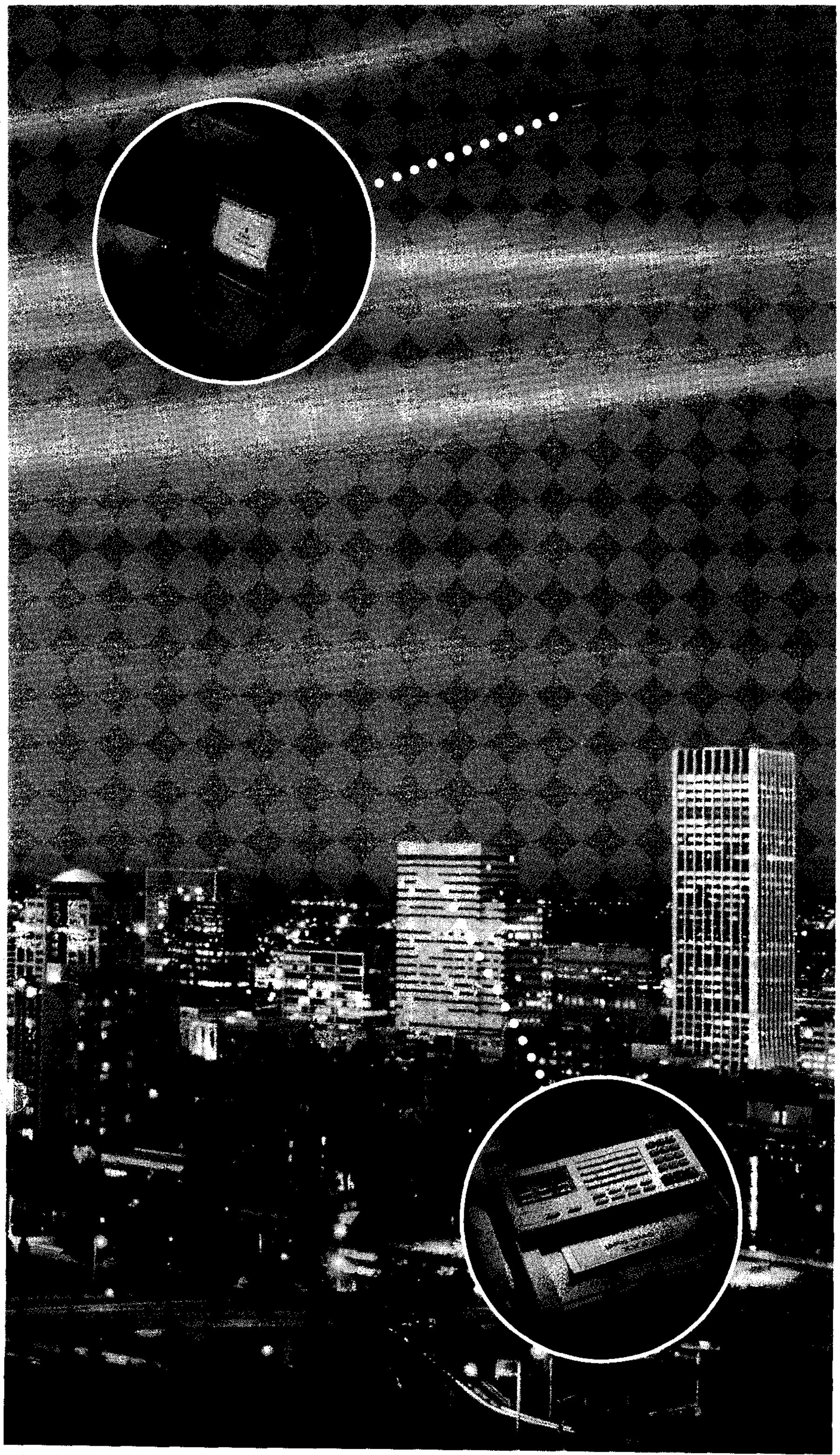

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Northern District prosecutors conducting the hearing, and they called Rosenthal in to testify before Holderman. They also called in Hogan, who at that point was on assignment in Los Angeles.

Hogan's testimony was, as many recalled it later, pure Bill Hogan. Rosenthal had testified to the effect that the conversation with Hogan was brief, and that Hogan had been preoccupied with his work on the El Rukn indictment. It would have been entirely understandable if Hogan had simply said that he did not remember Rosenthal's saying anything to him. But Hogan was emphatic. He testified that the conversation that Larry Rosenthal described "simply did not occur." Holderman thereupon ordered the United States Attorney's Office to scour its files to determine whether the "Rosenthal memorandum" could be found, and it was found, with papers from one of Rosenthal's old cases. It showed that Harris and Evans had failed the drug tests uncovered by Marianne Jackson's subpoena. Hogan swore that he had never seen the memo before. The Rosenthal memorandum acquired a nickname—"the smoking gun."

Holderman was enraged, and he dramatically expanded the scope of his hearings. He wanted to know everything about how the coöperating witnesses had been treated in the course of the investigation. There was, it turned out, more evidence relating to drug use by the coöperators. Five prisoners at the M.C.C. testified that they knew that Harris and Evans had used drugs in prison. Equally damaging was a memo that turned up from an agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms who had been charged with guarding the coöperators while they were meeting with the prosecutors on the thirty-ninth floor of the Kluczynski Building. The memo indicated that Hogan's thirty-ninth-floor office suite functioned like a frat house. El Rukn witnesses, the agent wrote at the time, had "unlimited access to telephone service," and even answered the phones themselves, saying, "A.T.F." The coöperators, he continued, "offered agents an opportunity to watch pornographic videos from a collection kept in task-force work spaces." At one point, the witnesses apparently stole prosecution documents, including Hogan's outline of his proposed prosecution of the case, and took them back to the M.C.C. to study. Holderman also learned that Hogan had a nickname on the thirty-ninth floor—"the Imam," which was the El Rukns' term for Jeff Fort, the commander of the gang.

Harris and Evans were called back to the stand, and Holderman found out that the coöperators also had been allowed to have sex with visitors. "They allowed us to have sex with our wives," Henry Harris told me, expanding on his testimony. "Everybody knew it. We called it office sex. We didn't know nothing 'bout it, and the A.T.F. agents were the ones who taught us. 'Go and lay your coat on the floor and get you some.' That's what they said to us. And we did." Harris and Hunter had occasional beers. Visitors were not checked for contraband when they arrived. Once, when Harry Evans's mother came to see him, he removed his shoe and passed it to her, saying, "Look at my gym shoe, Mom." She did, and passed it back. It was around this time that fellow-inmates said Evans often looked stoned.

The eccentric side to Henry Harris's character, which was well hidden during his trial testimony, came to the fore during his post-trial testimony. For example, he portrayed his failed drug tests as part of a conspiracy in the M.C.C. to incriminate him. "I was set up by the Bureau of Prisons," he told me. "I threatened to blow the whistle on an organized-crime community that they were running right there in the prison, so they dirtied up my urine." Harris also testified to an unusually close relationship with Hogan and his junior trial partner Ted Poulos. In a cross-examination, Harris recalled that, to take Harris's mind off his troubles in prison, Poulos "asked me to put together two essays, because I was in school then," and Harris went on to say, "He asked me to put together an essay concerning Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address. And he wanted me to explain it from A to Z to him in writing."

A defense attorney, Richard S. Kling, followed up. Kling asked, "Mr. Harris, have you sent other essays to the United States Attorney's Office regarding your perspectives on life?"

"My perspectives on life?" Harris responded.

"You sent Mr. Poulos an evaluation of Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address."

"Yes," Harris said. "And I sent him a complete essay concerning Abraham Lincoln. He didn't know Abraham Lincoln was black until I told him, you know, so—by the fact I went through the whole research for him and listed books and stuff where he can check things out and find out."

"You learned Abraham Lincoln was black?" Kling asked.

"Yes, sir."

"How—would you tell us how it is that you learned Abraham Lincoln was black?"

"Research, sir," Henry Harris replied. "Reading books, sir."

Harris, who was the government's most important witness in the El Rukn cases, was revealed as a drug user, a liar, and, it appeared, a nut. Evidence at the hearing established that the coöperators mingled freely, with few restrictions on their ability to line up their stories. (The theft of the prosecution memorandum would, in any event, have given the coöperators a handy script.) None of the privileges the coöperators received, such as the sex and the beer, had been disclosed to the defense attorneys, so they had had no opportunity to cross-examine the coöperators about them. And, of course, their failed drug tests had not been reported. As the hearing continued, Holderman just took to shaking his head in despair. Then he asked Corinda Luchetta, Hogan's paralegal, to take the stand.

LUCHETTA seems to have been a lonely young woman whose work habits were nearly as obsessive as Hogan's. She had gone to law school at night and was admitted to the bar in November of 1990, but she was so deeply committed to the El Rukn case that she decided to see it through to the end, even though doing so meant staying on as a paralegal. Another reason that Luchetta remained on the job may have been that the case gave her an opportunity to make friends.

The coöperators leaned on Luchetta and confided in her. One coöperator asked Luchetta if she would bring him a box of Ex-Lax at the M.C.C. She did. (Another inmate testified that visitors to the M.C.C. provided drugs to Harris and Evans in balloons or condoms, and that the inmates would swallow those and "then request Ex-Lax in order to quickly pass the condoms and/or balloons.") At another point, Henry Harris volunteered to Luchetta that he had refused to submit a urine specimen for a drug test at the M.C.C., because he was "too tired." (At the M.C.C., refusal to take a urine test is viewed as equivalent to failing it.) And on December 17, 1991, Luchetta unwound in a telephone call with Eugene Hunter, one of the coöperators, who was being held at the M.C.C. (Luchetta was apparently unaware that such phone calls were routinely tape-recorded.)

"Well, Corinda, I'll—I talked to you last weekend," Hunter said. "I thought you woulda took my advice. But my advice goes in one ear, out the other. . . ."

"What advice? Did you give me some?" Luchetta asked.

"Yeah . . . you know, I'm going to be very direct and very respectful at the same time. You need to go out and get laid—good."

"Yeah, I know, I know, I know, I know." Luchetta went on to say that she had a problem she wanted to discuss with Hunter—her feelings for Earl Hawkins, another El Rukn coöperator and convicted murderer. As Luchetta reported it to Hunter, a friend had said to her "that this is just a physical thing." She went on, "It—see, what I don't understand is I feel weird about it. I mean, normally I can handle just being attracted to somebody. . . . But I feel weird about it because of who he is." Luchetta then said that "the Imam"—Hogan—had just come by to invite her to the office Christmas party, but "I'd rather think about Earl, anyway."

"So, just out of curiosity," Hunter asked, "what would you like to do to Earl?"

Luchetta laughed. "Ten minutes in a locked room. That's all it would take."

"All right, Rindy," Hunter said, changing the subject. "We done had enough business for the day. You have to tell me my bedtime stories for the night."

"Tell you a bedtime story? Gee."

"Yeah, I have tension, too. You know?"

"You poor thing."

"And you help me release my tension."

"I don't know, Eugene," Luchetta said. "Oh, let me see, what kind of a story can I tell you?" She asked him to describe the visiting room of a prison, where she might visit him, then asked, "What would you have me do first?"

"I just want to look."

"Look but don't touch," Luchetta said. "I don't think so."

"You sit on my lap. . . . Um huh. Just sitting down and standing up."

"Yeah, I gotcha," Luchetta said,

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laughing. "I know the anatomy well enough for one of those virgin Catholic girls."

Hunter then inquired, "So now that you've got everything up in the air, will you help me get it down?"

"Oh, gosh, let me see," Luchetta mused. "I've always wanted to, like, stop an elevator between floors."

"Um huh."

"And just stand someone up against the wall."

The conversation continued for a while longer, and Hunter said, "You know, talking to you sometimes, I get—I have orgasms."

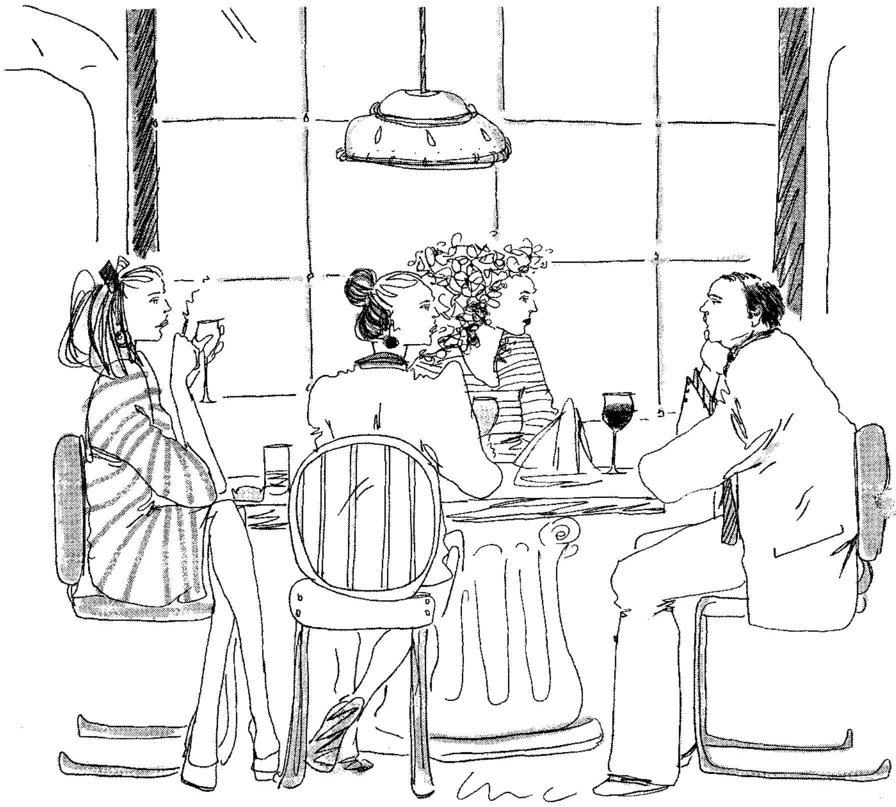
Luchetta laughed.

"Real ones," Hunter went on. "Today I have one."

"It's very flattering, Gene."

The courtroom was very quiet as the Luchetta-Hunter tape was played. Actually, it is not clear precisely what rule, if any, was broken by this conversation between a prosecution paralegal and a confessed murderer. It was inappropriate, bizarre, and embarrassing, but not, perhaps, illegal. Yet, turning up, as it did, near the end of the hearings, the tape must have looked to Holderman like the last straw, the final, and clearest, indicator that this prosecution was out of control—that the prosecution and its witnesses had ceased operating at some distance from one another, and that their alliance was an unholy one.

Because Hogan was a witness in the post-trial hearings, he could not represent the government, and the Northern District prosecutors who took over, led by a lawyer named Barry Rand Elden, made a key strategic decision, despite heated objections by Hogan. Once the Rosenthal memo surfaced, the government decided to forgo the argument that there had been no prosecutorial misconduct. Since Rosenthal obviously had known about the failed drug test, and since he was a prosecutor, the government's theory went, "the government" had known about it and had failed to disclose it to the defense. Instead of arguing that no misconduct had taken place, Elden moved to a fallback position. Even assuming that the government had neglected to disclose the failed drug tests, office sex, and alcohol use, Elden argued, the convictions should still not be reversed. Elden said that Hogan had disclosed to the defense that his coöperators were murderers, drug dealers, and, before their arrests, drug abusers. The disclosure of the prison drug tests would have made no difference. Hogan's der-



"Well, men want it all, too."

election was therefore harmless error.

While waiting for Holderman's decision, in early 1993, Hogan had one more duty to fulfill—perhaps his most important one. In a case peripherally related to the other El Rukn prosecutions, Thomas J. Maloney, who had been a Cook County Circuit Court judge for thirteen years, was charged with accepting bribes to fix five cases, including three murder cases, and Hogan was acting as prosecutor in the trial of Maloney. As it happened, one of the cases was a prosecution of the El Rukn coöperator Earl Hawkins. Maloney was the first judge in the history of Illinois ever prosecuted for fixing a murder trial, and the case was a difficult one. Perhaps aware that he was being investigated, Maloney at one point had returned the bribe money, and Hawkins had been convicted and sentenced to death. "Bill was under enormous pressure," Scott Mendeloff, who tried the Maloney case with Hogan, later told me. "He was exhausted to start with, because he had tried six El Rukn cases in the previous year and a half. We had evidence that was strong but not a slam dunk by any stretch of the imagination. We had very tough defense attorneys. And Bill had just finished the post-trial hearings with Holderman, and he had the spectre of losing his job and his law license. It was just crushing pressure, and Bill tried the Maloney case magnificently—like I've never seen someone try a case." On April 16, 1993, Judge Maloney was convicted of fixing all three murder cases.

Seven weeks later, Judge Holderman issued his opinion on the post-trial hearing. He found that Hogan had engaged in extensive prosecutorial misconduct, had lied on the witness stand about his meeting with Rosenthal, and had "deliberately suppressed" his knowledge of "continuing criminal conduct of illegal acquisition, possession and use of drugs over a prolonged period . . . within the prosecutor's office and aided by the government's permissiveness." Holderman found that these errors were not harmless and that all the convictions had to be reversed, because the coöperators' veracity was so important to the government's case. "The only conclusion that can be drawn is that Hogan suppressed the Brady information in bad faith to improve, unconstitutionally, the government's chances of victory," Holderman wrote. Ten days later, on June 14, 1993, Judge Suzanne B. Conlon, a judge in another of the El Rukn cases, and with whom Hogan had also clashed, reversed the El Rukn convictions over which she had presided, because of the prosecution's "failure to comply with basic constitutional and ethical discovery obligations."

Hogan had one hope left. Judge Aspen had yet to rule on the misconduct motion in his trial. The Holderman and Conlon rulings could be attributed, at least in part, to the extremely bad chemistry that had developed between Hogan and those judges. Even though Hogan had clashed with Aspen over the severance issues, the prosecution he conducted under Aspen had passed without major conflict between them. What was more, the defendants in Aspen's case were the worst of the El Rukn defendants—the generals, and also Noah Robinson. Surely, Hogan and his supporters thought, Aspen—levelheaded, fair-minded, responsible—would never let those people go.

Hogan had to wait all summer to find out. On September 20, 1993, Aspen ruled. "This is the most painful decision that this court has ever been obliged to render, making the crafting of this opinion a sad and difficult undertaking," the hundred-and-eighty-one-page opinion began. "Mindful of the consequences of our ruling, we would have preferred to have been able to reach a result other than what must be. . . .

"The consequences of our ruling today are tragic in many respects. It is a tragedy that the convictions of some of the most hardened and anti-social criminals in the history of this community must be overturned.

"It is tragic that the United States of America has squandered millions of taxpayer dollars and years of difficult labor by the courts, prosecutors, and law-enforcement officers in the investigation and trial of these botched prosecutions.

"It is tragic that the hard-earned and well-deserved reputations for professionalism of the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois have been so unfairly tainted by the actions of so few.

"It is a personal tragedy for the lead El Rukn prosecutor who, in seeking to attain the laudable goal of ridding society of an organization of predatory career criminals, was willing to abandon

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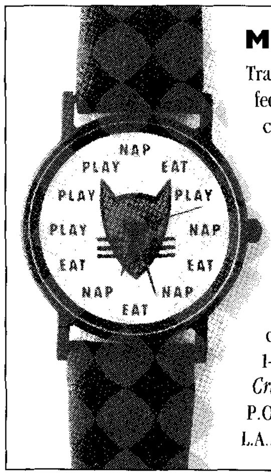

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fundamental notions of due process of law and deviate from acceptable standards of prosecutorial conduct."

WHEN I met with Bill Hogan in Chicago over two days this spring, he looked physically transformed from the man who had tried the El Rukn cases. Tropical sun had bleached his blond hair to the color of straw, and it flopped down well over his collar. His skin was ruddy and tanned, his belly was flat, and his arms were thickly muscled. Two rope bracelets encircled his right wrist. But for the Marlboro Lights he was chain-smoking, Hogan might have been an especially well-preserved, if rather grim, beach bum.

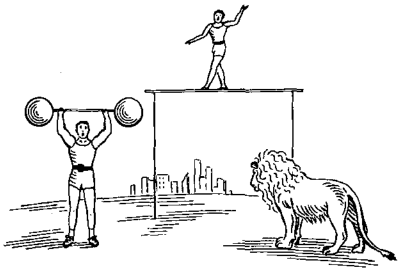
"After I was suspended last July, the Office of Professional Responsibility told me they wanted to interview me in September, then it was October, then December," Hogan told me. "All I was wanting was to get the hell out of Dodge."

Hogan went to the Virgin Islands alone, and there he met up with a group of expatriate Europeans. "Just before I came back here, we figured we'd take a long sail from the Caribbean to Fort Lauderdale, just take a handful of days," Hogan said. "There were four of us on this thirty-six-foot boat." Three days into the open sea, they were caught up in hurricane-force winds. "We had forty hours of sixty-knot winds, lost our mainsail, came goddam close to being killed." Hogan tells the story without self-pity, but the message is clear: Just my luck. He arrived back in Chicago, by airplane, in the last week of February.

Hogan now spends most of his days in the office of his lawyer, a genial law-school chum named Shelly B. Kulwin. Hogan speaks calmly and cogently about his predicament. He has a trial lawyer's low, sonorous voice, with just a long-vowelled hint of Chicago, which used to remind juries of his local roots. He knows that the public picture of him is that of a lawless vigilante. Indeed, with the exception of a balanced story by Michael Abramowitz in the magazine *Chicago*, the local press has done little but repeat the judges' accusations against him. He is quick to cite the few bright spots that remain in the El Rukn story. Judge Aspen's decision (but not Holderman's) is being appealed. Several defendants (including Noah Robinson) are serving lengthy prison terms for crimes unrelated to these cases, so they cannot be released immediately. The judge in one El Rukn case (albeit one that Hogan did not try) has declined to reverse the convictions from that trial. Still, on his own behavior Hogan is adamant.

"Do I regret my actions in this case?" he said. "Not a bit. Not one iota. I don't want to sound arrogant, but I am extraordinarily proud of my work here and the results we achieved and how we achieved them. I never, ever, ever would have compromised my efforts here in order to win, and I didn't." The Office of Professional Responsibility has asked Hogan not to discuss the details of the case publicly, but in a brief that he and Kulwin filed, Hogan offered a thoughtful, considered response to every accusation. He never knew that Harris and Evans were using drugs at the M.C.C. He never knew that Harris refused to take a drug test. (He says Luchetta never told him.) He never knew that any of the coöperators had sex in the office. The A.T.F. agent who wrote the memo about it, Hogan notes, later admitted that he may have overreacted. Hogan never gave any coöperator a beer. And no, Hogan insists, Larry Rosenthal never mentioned the so-called smoking-gun memo to him. "Leopards don't change their spots," he said. "I've been a prosecutor for nearly twelve years, and I was never—not once—accused of any kind of misconduct. And now they say I just all of a sudden did all these improper things. It makes no sense. It couldn't happen and it didn't happen. I was not some wild-eyed zealot who was desperate to rid the earth of this scourge. I was very professional and I did the job the way it's supposed to be done."

In our conversation, Hogan seemed less than persuasive only once—when I asked him about Henry Harris. "Henry is a very multifaceted person, a very interesting guy," Hogan said. "He used drugs for years, but he's got a tremendous memory. He's not crazy, but he can seem pretty wacky." In consequence of the misconduct findings, Harris has moved to have his guilty plea set aside, on the ground that the prosecutors broke promises to him—specifically, that Hogan had told Harris that he would get less than twenty years in prison. One of the many ironies of the El Rukn case is that the coöperators may wind up worse off than anyone else. According to Harris's plea bargain, he must serve a minimum of twenty years, but the people he testified against may go free. Hogan and the Northern District, of course, insist that Harris was promised no better deal than the twenty-year minimum.



Harris (who is now hedging on Lincoln's race) told me, "The government has the nerve to respond that Hogan said he ain't made me any promises. If he didn't make me any promises, why did I plead guilty? If he didn't make any promises, why did six El Rukns plead out to all these murders? I mean, people don't just walk into court and plead to thirty different murders because they feel like it. We all expected to get something from it, and we're getting nothing, man. See, when I tell on sixty-five black men the government says I'm telling the truth, but when I talk about a few white prosecutors they say it's not so. You tell me, how can that be?"

It's a good question. All deal-makers obviously want the best deal they can get. But perhaps the message of the El Rukn case is that there are some people with whom prosecutors should never make deals, even if it costs them the opportunity to make megacases. Every time the government puts someone on the witness stand, it identifies with him, vouches for him, stands by him. After all, as the proverb that Hogan quoted says, "show me your friends and I will show you who you are." Perhaps when prosecutors make friends with the Henry Harrises of the world that is what they become. And perhaps, ultimately, Hogan was not the right man to make this case. The judges' case against him is largely one of willful blindness—that Hogan must have known that his coöperators were abusing drugs, and that he could not have missed the shenanigans on the thirty-ninth floor. But the combination of Hogan's obsessive focus on his own goals and his endless overwork may indeed have blinded him; he simply may not have seen what he should have.

Hogan, of course, would be neither

the first nor the only prosecutor to make a deal with the Devil. Indeed, as he and his lawyer acidly point out, it was Hogan's superiors in the office who negotiated the details of Harris's and the other El Rukns' plea bargains. It was the same superiors who allowed him to shoulder such an enormous burden of trials virtually by himself; the same superiors who were so eager to share in the credit as the convictions in the El Rukn cases were first coming in; and the same superiors who decided not to defend Hogan's good faith in the post-trial hearings. Of late, Hogan hears little from these superiors.

I noticed a small change in Hogan over the two days I saw him. The first day, he was confident, poised, almost serene. The second day, his tan looked to be fading, and as he sat before a thick stack of documents from the case he seemed to be sensing anew the size of his troubles. His son, Billy, has just graduated from college in Michigan. Hogan lives alone in a small apartment downtown. He receives a paycheck, but he may not have a job. As he well knows, the Office of Professional Responsibility has lately been much criticized as a paper tiger, unwilling to take on prosecutors. What better case for O.P.R. to prove its mettle than one in which three judges have already found serious misconduct?

When I asked Hogan what he thought he would do after the O.P.R. report came out, he told me, "When I was twelve, I had a teacher in the seventh grade who distributed books that people could read for extra credit. He gave me some books by a guy named Kenneth Roberts, who's pretty much forgotten now, but who wrote a whole series of historical novels in the thirties and forties. They were about a town he called Arundel, in Maine, between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812. I must have read a dozen of these books, and as a result I sort of decided that I wanted to do two things. I decided I wanted to become a lawyer. They were really putting the country together in those books, and I saw what a big role the law had, and I just knew that was what I would do with my life. The other thing I wanted to do was sail around the world, and that's what I'm going to do after the report. There's nothing holding me here." ♦

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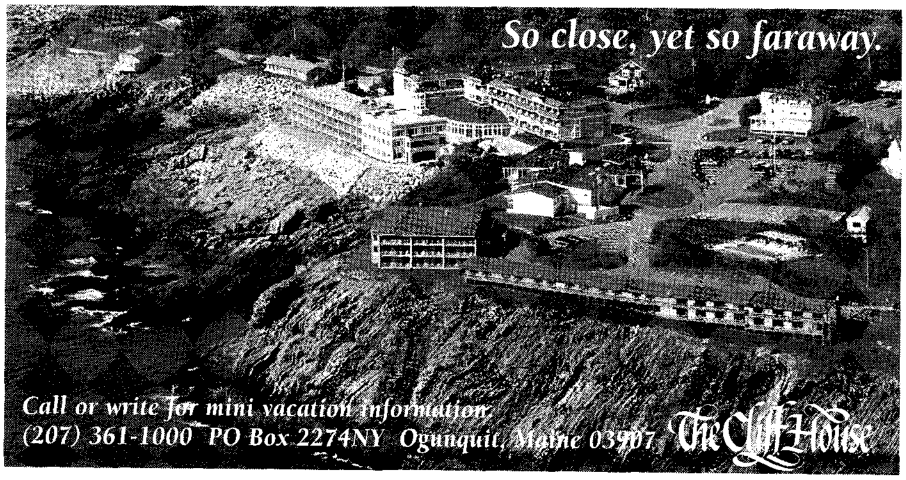

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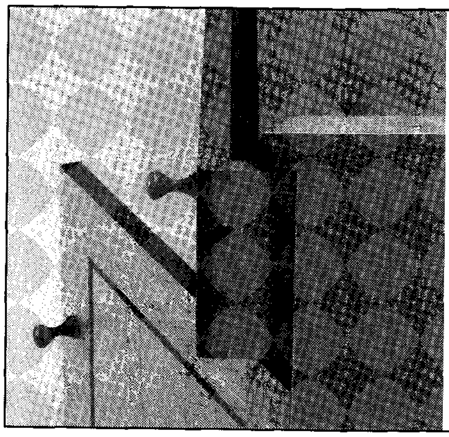

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With his legendary piques and eccentricities, the author V. S. Naipaul has managed to estrange himself from most people, places, and things. But if Naipaul intimidates, his writing of the past forty years is universally admired for its unique and penetrating perspective—that of a man who discovers the world as a stranger.

BY STEPHEN SCHIFF

WHEN Saul Bellow returned from a trip to London in the winter of 1982, he told friends about meeting the writer V. S. Naipaul for the first time. "After one look from him, I could skip Yom Kippur," Bellow said. Naipaul was fifty then, and he had spent decades developing his famously forbidding, admonitory presence—his "eagle-on-the-crags look," as Bellow puts it.

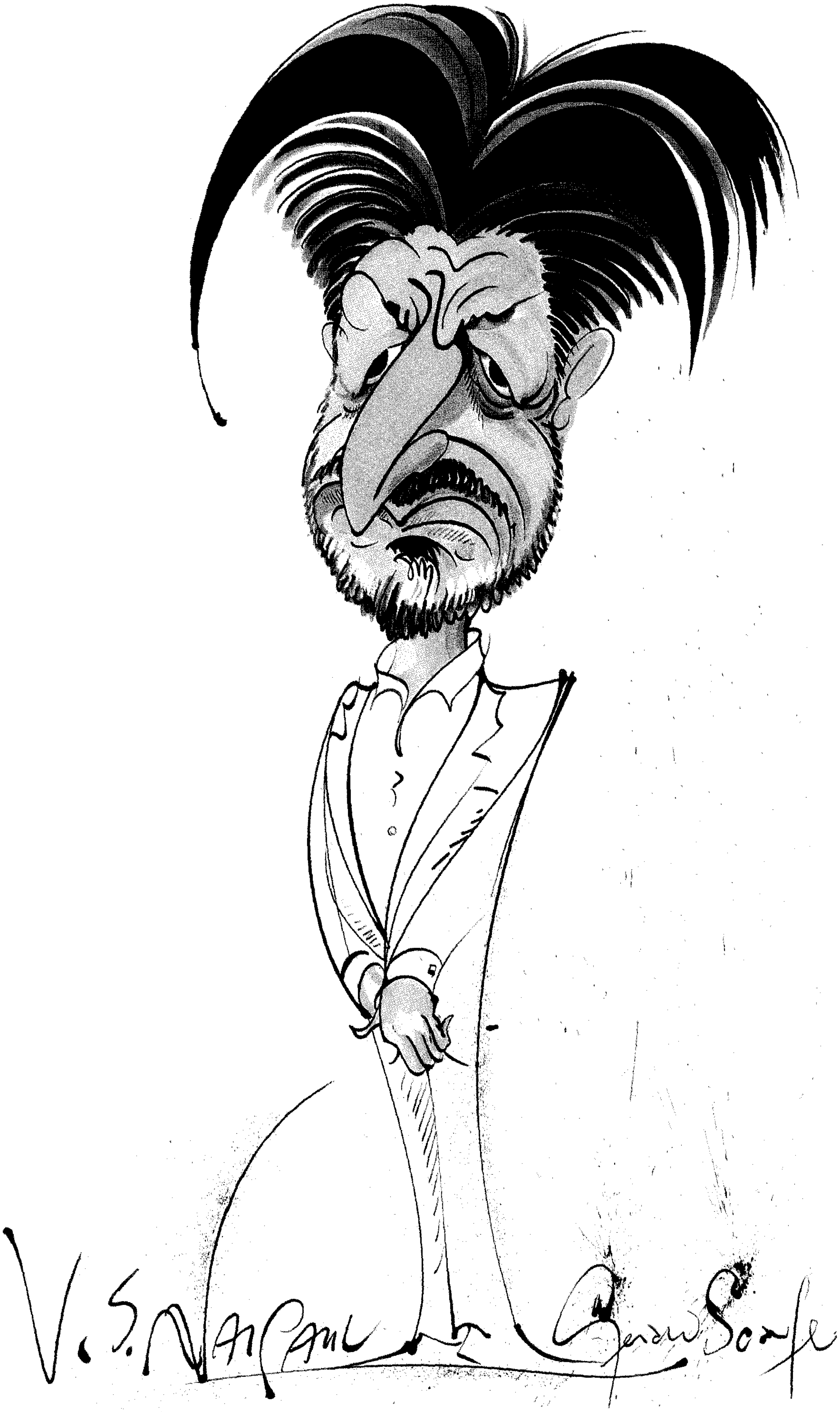
Photographs of him from the late fifties and early sixties, when he first emerged as a writer of deft comic novels and stories about his native Trinidad, show something different: a slender, boyish sprite, his walnut-colored skin almost dewy, his thick black hair flopping rakishly across his forehead, his eyes dreamy and gleaming. But in pictures taken only a few years later you see the man Bellow saw. The hooded eyes have become sulfurous and accusing, and they peer out warily from behind middens of flesh; the band of skin between them is clenched, and the mouth, so sensuous in earlier photographs, now tugs downward at the corners in a caricature of disdain. Naipaul the arrogant, Naipaul the severe.

Yet this was the Naipaul who, by the time Bellow met him, had gathered more praise than most writers accrue in a lifetime. Every few years, it seemed, he was short-listed for the Nobel Prize; critics commonly called him "Britain's greatest living writer," "the best novelist now writing," "our finest writer of the English sentence" (this from his frequent detractor the Nobel laureate Derek Walcott). His early fiction, written in a clipped, knowing style that seemed improbably disciplined and mature for a writer still in his twenties, had been terribly funny—and terribly poignant, too—about the yearnings of an island populace dimly convinced that real life was going on somewhere else. Those early books won awards, attracted tributes from the likes of Kingsley Amis and Anthony Powell, and were followed, in 1961, by a brilliant comic epic, "A House for Mr. Biswas." Here was something genuinely new in the world: the Great West Indian Novel, a vigorous, prodigiously detailed account of the frustrating life and early death of Naipaul's father, who had been a struggling journalist in Trinidad. "A House for Mr. Biswas" was Dickensian in its scope and sympathy, yet wholly original; it was both a robust portrait of a peculiar community—the descendants of Uttar Pradesh Brahmins who came west to Trinidad as indentured laborers—and a vivid metaphor for the colonial predicament itself. Naipaul brought to it an eye alert to both buffoonery and pain, and a lapidary, almost styleless style—a style that marched from one plain description to the next, avoiding music and show, steadily building a world. Although "A House for Mr. Biswas" was never a best-seller, Naipaul's mastery was unmistakable. And he knew it. "My whole being was consumed with this thing," he told me recently. "I remember walking the streets to buy bread and doing my shopping exalted. I knew I was carrying something wonderful." Born in poverty, an East Indian of the West Indies—an exile twice over—he had washed up in England, had gone through Oxford, had found a prominent spot on the British literary map. And he was only twenty-nine.

But something changed. After "A House for Mr. Biswas," his writing grew progressively gloomier. Novels like "The Mimic Men," "In a Free State" (which won England's Booker Prize), "Guerrillas," and "A Bend in the River" were corrosive, richly observed studies of the violence and degradation that have resulted, in Naipaul's view, from the sudden mingling of First and Third World populations in the postwar era. The clownish strivers of the early books gave way to a menagerie of lost souls, shattered expatriates trying to build new lives in equally shattered lands, and succumbing in the end to chaos, self-destruction, rape, and murder. These were bleak, ominous books, marred by misanthropy and sexual disgust, but Conradian in the way they explored the connections between personal and political anarchy. And they were beautifully written: Naipaul created a pitiless poetry of ruined landscapes—of corrugated-iron shanties, fetid rivers, cutlass-toting schoolboys, and distant, portentous gunfire. The novels looked pessimistic then; now they look prophetic. Meanwhile, books of history and travel, like "The Middle Passage" (about the West Indies and South America), "An Area of Darkness" (about India), "The Loss of El Dorado" (about Trinidad), and "Among the Believers" (about Islam), gave Naipaul a new reputation: he was a scourge of the post-colonial world; an uncompromising critic of every liberation movement, every ideologue and revolutionary; and, to his enemies, a self-created mandarin who sneered from on high at the "half-made" societies bobbing in the wake of departing colonial powers. Many on the left hated him, thought him racist and anti-Third World. They objected to the way he called certain groups "barbarian," certain societies "primitive" or "simple." And Naipaul didn't mind baiting his enemies, sometimes outrageously. He was anything but politically correct.

Not long ago, sitting in the dining room of his cottage, in Wiltshire, I asked him about the arguments that some of his foes had put forward. His answer was extravagant and gorgeous and strange—

GERALD SCARFE


V. S. NAIPAUL
Gerald Scarfe

a kind of dithyramb. "I never argue," he began. "I loathe argument. I observe, and I think for a long time. My words are always well chosen. I'm not a debater. How can I be concerned about people who don't like my work? No, I can't cope with that. I can't cope with that. I don't *read* these things. I don't even read when people tell me nice reviews. I'm nervous of being made self-conscious. I've got to remain pure. You've got to move on to the next piece of work in a pure spirit. And I know that I am considerably more intelligent than the squabbles raised around me. People are not intelligent enough in their analysis of what's wrong with their societies. They only know about their enemies. My attitude has always been different: that one must look inward and understand why one is weak, why a culture like mine or like the one in India, from which I come ancestrally—why they are so without protection in the world. And this has taken me to a higher global understanding of things."

Perhaps, I suggested, his new book was an attempt to address some of his critics' accusations. "A Way in the World," which Knopf is calling his first novel in seven years (though it is being published in England not as a novel but as "a sequence"), is a series of nine related stories, some clearly autobiographical, some embodying new approaches to material he has explored elsewhere, but all of them about people who are living a lie. Most of his characters are visitors to the West Indies: travel writers; would-be liberators; huge figures, like Sir Walter Raleigh and the nineteenth-century revolutionary Francisco de Miranda; and smaller ones, like a Trinidadian Indian trying to pass himself off as a well-to-do Venezuelan on an airplane. Much of the book is written in the form of long monologues, and in these Naipaul evinces a sympathy for his fibbers and dreamers and frauds which is unlike anything in his previous fiction. Could his evident regard for the black Trinidadian character named Blair or for the black Trinidadian revolutionary named Lebrun (transparently based on the writer C. L. R. James) or for the Amerindian who tells much of Raleigh's story—could these things have been a response to the critics who had so oversimplified his work?

The dithyramb continued. "No. I don't want to talk about this. The notes for this book—some of them were made seventeen years ago, and it's been cogitated for a very long time. No. Writing isn't that. Writing isn't just being anti-African or anti-Negro—whatever. How on earth? It's absurd. The books have to look after themselves, and they will be around as long as people find that they are illuminating. Instead of coming to me and asking 'Why did you write this book?' you should be saying 'How did you see so much?' That should be the question. And the question might be 'Why do you have this eye—that you can point out the flaws in movements?' And I would say 'It is very easy to see the flaws in movements if you abolish sentimentality and you question everything that bothers you.' Simple people write simple things. The thing is, I am not a simple man. I have an interesting mind, a very analytical mind. And what I say tends to be interesting. And also very true. That's all that I can do about it. I can't lie. I can't serve a cause. I've never served a cause. A cause always corrupts."

All this was said with some heat, and yet there was a surprising, practiced charm in it as well. I felt he wasn't raging at me; the implicit message was "We are not going to enjoy ourselves if you keep asking me questions like that, and if you don't we will." Naipaul's voice is a melodious baritone, as plangent as any actor's, and, like an actor, he uses it self-consciously, caressing words like "lie" and "flaws," dropping into a whisper or a hiss, and then climbing to heights of ringing declamation. The accent is properly Oxonian, but with a lilt of the islands in it, and there is Naipaul's lovely, now famous affectation: the repetition of certain phrases, over and over, until they become soothing and chantlike and intimate. (Some have called it "the Naipaul bis," from the musical term for a passage that repeats.) What you say to him gets repeated, too, as if he were ingesting it, making it his own for later use, and he punctuates his conversation with disarming, conspiratorial asides—"You *know* these things, don't you? You *know* these things. Yes. You *know* these things"—that sometimes implicate you in knowing things you don't know at all. At one point in our conversations, he said, "I did have for many years, when I was young,

In this style 10/6

"Excuse me, may I see your invitation?"

the feeling that if I didn't do my work I would find it very hard to eat. I hated the idea of eating at the end of the day." And then, looking at me sharply: "You don't know about this? You don't see it in your own life?" I had to admit I did not.

I HAD approached him with some trepidation, because his scary fastidiousness has become legend. It was said that he was grossly intolerant of even a few minutes' tardiness, that if you asked him to dinner he would first demand a rundown of the menu (vegetarian only, please) and admonish you to serve good wine; it was said that he had reduced more than one ill-prepared journalist to tears, and that he was fond of remarking, "Never give anyone a second chance. When people have let you down, you can be sure they will do it again." He has a hair-trigger temper, and has been known to fly into long, excoriating rages, in restaurants, on airplanes, at hotels. Once, he abruptly changed publishing houses when he discovered himself listed in the spring catalogue as a "West Indian writer." On another occasion, a publisher flew him to Holland for a weeklong series of press conferences and interviews, but the first questioner at the first conference posed a query he found unworthy, and—despite the lights, the cameras, and the assembled Dutch press—Naipaul walked out, had himself driven to the airport, and took the next plane back to England.

All these stories, and then that face—the face that so alarmed Bellow, with its tormented eyes and the grimace of displeasure at a world that could never measure up.

But the face I encountered was altogether different. Naipaul is nearly sixty-two now, and his eyes have grown smoky and mirthful, with wispy little sprigs above them instead of the beetling brows I had expected. He is small, narrow-boned, and elegant-looking, and his down-turned mouth looks not sour but witty, surrounded, as it is, by a salty beard that gives him an avuncular air. Even in the midst of his dithyramb, there is something gentle and coaxing in the way he speaks, almost like a plea for understanding; you can feel the anxiety welling behind his words—the very anxiety that must have given him his fearsome reputation through the years, boiling over into hysteria and bad behavior and fury. These days, he is more likely to retreat into laughter. "People think that one is a very serious, dour, gloomy man, but one is full of humor," he says. "That tone is always available to the writer. The humor is always available, waiting to bubble up, when it's needed."

That is how he talks, as if he were observing from afar the creature who bears his name. He says "one" instead of "I"; he refers to himself as "the writer" and sometimes as "the man." "I do it instinctively, distinguishing between them, between writer and man," he says. Having been knighted in 1990, the man is now formally known as Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, but he doesn't use the title. His friends call him Vidia, and so does his wife, Pat, whom he calls Patsy. She is a small, slender, handsome Englishwoman of about Naipaul's age, with gray hair that is cut in a pageboy and, behind big, round glasses, very wide-awake eyes. They met at Oxford and married in 1955, when Naipaul was twenty-two, and though she was briefly a schoolteacher during the years when Naipaul's books couldn't support them, she has since functioned as his organizer, his sometime researcher, his closest adviser. In even the most autobiographical of his books, Pat is never mentioned (a "companion" is referred to once in "An Area of Darkness"), but friends say she can be scrappy, rebuking her husband during his more unsavory rhetorical flights—he has been known, for instance, to demand corporal punishment for a tardy plumber, or to refer to people as "monkeys," "infies" (short for "inferiors"), and, occasionally, "bow-and-arrow men." (Critics crying "Racism!" should note that he deploys such terms against white, upper-middle-class Englishmen as readily as against blacks and Indians and Arabs.) Still, ever since my arrival at the Wiltshire house Pat has spent most of her time meekly serving—a fish lunch, a rhubarb pie, endless pots of tea. Often, she seems to be lurking in doorways, waiting to be granted an audience with the great man; it is the sort of relationship that has established its own grooves and rhythms, but an outsider is likely to find it disquieting.

Vidia, on the other hand, can be mischievous about it. One afternoon, he stops our conversation in midsentence to cock an ear toward what Pat is saying on the telephone in another room. "Women's voices!" he hisses. "I can't *stand* the sound of women's voices now. I turn the radio off when I hear a woman. I get very *irritated.* So you see. This is how far one has sunk." He giggles. It is the sort of outrageous statement that might be putty in the hands of his enemies, but I can't help noticing that he never demands agreement. Naipaul is aware of his eccentricities, even revels in them. He has always viewed himself as the ultimate exile, hence the ultimate oddity; by now, peculiarity has become a way of life. He has opinions on everything (including music, which he admits to me he knows absolutely nothing about), and he doesn't discriminate among his sentiments, doesn't select or censor. If he feels something, it must be expressed. And this is as true of the work as of the man: in his writing, too, no morsel of information, no thoughtful tangent is deemed extraneous. (The reader will sometimes disagree.)

He grew up in Port of Spain, in an enormous, anarchic family very like the one in "A House for Mr. Biswas," and ever since, it seems, he has been searching for quiet and order and sense. He has never wanted children. "It really comes from a detestation of the squalling background of children that I grew up with in my extended family," he says. His books linger obsessively over the details of badly built dwellings, shoddy furniture, sloppy art; these reminders of the old chaos afflict him. He is finicky about noise, about food, about wine, about the temperature; his nerves seem raw, close to the surface. And, though he has always had very real troubles with asthma, he is a fanatical exerciser, a longtime devotee of a yogic maneuver known as the bridge, in which he stands and stretches himself back until his hands hit the floor, contorting his body into the shape of a Romanesque arch. After every book, he complains of profound fatigue. "I have no more than one hundred months left," he told me one evening. "One hundred months, I mean, of productive life. Yes. Yes. It's an immense relief to feel that you're near the end of things." He stared gravely into the middle distance. I didn't have the heart

"Murchison is still in denial."

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to tell him that I recalled his announcing the very same thing—a hundred more months of productive life—to a British interviewer in 1979, when he was forty-seven years old.

"Vidia is a sufferer," Diana Athill, who edited nineteen of his twenty-two books, says. "He was born with a skin or two too few. The thing about editing him was that you didn't actually ever have to do a single thing to any of his books. But you did have to do a lot of attempting to cheer him up, because he would deliver a book and he would be happy when he delivered it, and then really soon he would go into a pit: What is the point? What is the point of writing books? I'm never going to write another book, and no one knows how to publish books, and no one knows how to review books. And you would have to have long lunches in which you were trying to persuade him that life wasn't as hopeless as it appeared. We actually talked about this once when he was very low, and I said, 'Well, don't you get a feeling sometimes— I walk down the street and see the trees coming into leaf, and I get a feeling that makes life worth living.' And he said, 'Do you really? You're awfully lucky. It doesn't happen to me.' "

"He is depressive at times," his friend the writer Paul Theroux says. "But his other side is not manic—it's joyous. He actually said to me once, 'I have a great capacity for happiness.' But he also, literally, stays home, indoors, for weeks or months on end, just thinking, doing nothing more than developing a whole train of thought. I don't know anyone else quite like that." Not surprisingly, his acquaintances say they don't see much of him—and many of them have quarrelled with him. "He has a shrinking circle of friends," says Theroux, who, along with the critic Francis Wyndham and the London social figure Teresa Wells, remains among the loyal few. Although Naipaul has enjoyed more social life than he likes to let on—especially during the sixties and seventies, when, as he says, "I briefly frequented the circle around Antonia Fraser"—he has long kept aloof from the London literary establishment. In fact, he has spent most of his life working very hard: writing, travelling, and then writing still more about what his travels inspire. He is still close to his sisters (one of whom died in 1984, leaving four) and their children, and though he says he was not particularly intimate with his brother, Shiva, who was thirteen years his junior, friends recall a patriarchal—and rather tough—relationship. Like Vidia, Shiva went to Oxford, and, like Vidia, he became a writer; his first two novels, "Fireflies" and "The Chip-Chip Gatherers," were well received. The trouble was that Shiva's view of the world was rather like his brother's, and so were his travels (Africa, South America); he never fully emerged from Vidia's shadow.

"Before Shiva was at Oxford, Vidia was very helpful to him," Athill says. "But I once went to lunch, and it was Vidia, Pat, me, and Shiva. And in Vidia's eyes Shiva couldn't do anything right. He had this picture in his mind that Shiva was going to utterly disgrace himself and the family and that he was going to become a drug addict, was going to be useless. It was intense anxiety. He was cruel to the boy, really cruel, telling him he was a fool whenever he said anything or did anything—really, to a point where Shiva was sitting there not daring to speak, because if he said anything he was snipped at. I think Vidia loved him, but he thought Shiva was going to come to some terrible end."

In a way, he was right. Overweight and a heavy smoker, Shiva died of a heart attack in 1985, at the age of forty. For Vidia, it was a colossal blow. "My body began to burn," he told me. "I was doing a television program, and my hands began to erupt. My body was covered with an eczema—the eczema of grief." When I saw him a few weeks ago, he still retained a trace of it, a spot near the eye, and there were streaks of shiny, dark, chapped-looking skin, like oil slicks, high on his cheeks. These, he explained, had recently "adhered" to the original eczema. Standing in his living room, he solemnly wagged two fingers at the black streaks, as though delivering a curse. "Death," he said.

But Pat had overheard him. "Oh, stop that," she ordered.

"Death has come to me and said, 'You are mine,' " Vidia intoned, and, while Pat sputtered protests, he burst into laughter.

He keeps two apartments in London—one an airy duplex with lots of polished blond wood, the other a tiny place he has had for over twenty years, where, he says, "I go and sit and sometimes I take in the silence. Just to be alone. Not to hear voices." Most of the time, though, he is in Wiltshire, near Stonehenge and Salisbury, where he has lived for twenty-four years—first in a three-room cottage on the estate of the aesthete and recluse Stephen Tennant, and then, for the last twelve years, in a cottage of his own, a sturdy, two-story brick house with what seem like dozens of small rooms—most of them outfitted with desks and bookshelves, and strewn with papers. "I work in all the rooms," he says. "It's a house of work."

He writes slowly and painfully—as I can see when he shows me some of his notebooks. Flipping the pages, he says, "Look, these four words are all of April 19th. I spent a whole day doing that." He flips another page. "Ah, you see, the same paragraph being written, several versions of it. That's very good. I know by now that if I have a very good day it tends to be followed by a very bad day. Because I'm exhausted by my mind. Look at that. Look at that. In January, I really am suffering, you see: 'Bad night. Lost. Very low. But did exercises. 175.' That's a punishing number. A hundred and seventy-five bridges. That is killing oneself. That's murder. But it kept me alive. Yes. Yes. The exercises revive you."

Naipaul writes in longhand and then resorts to the computer. "It's seldom more than four hundred words a day," he says. "It's not in my brain to do more. You start in the morning, when you're free, and then lunch, and then you work in the evening before dinner. Dinner might be late if you're having a good burst. And the good burst would be just that little part of a page. That would be quite enough." I ask him whether he reads other people's books while working on his own. "I read some pages, but I don't finish books," he says. "I follow what Proust said: I get in touch with the music of the writer, and that's enough."

Proudly, he shows me his garden; there is a lot of lawn, some struggling trees, and a flourishing, diverse hedge. He fingers a familiar-looking shrub, tenderly. "It's holly, yes," he says. "I love the holly. I planted it for the red berries and the thorn. A little bit of one's childhood is coming out here—it's a Christmas thing. And do you know that in the Himalayas it is fed to camels?"

We tramp around for a while, with Naipaul explaining which plants are worthy and which are not. In this, as in everything else, he is a snob. "This almond I don't like—Betjeman has written about it. It looks like something from the garden center. Now, these are plum trees. These are things which I wouldn't do now, but visitors adore them—especially people from France. They're a kind of cherry blossom. To me, they're the quintessential suburban plant. But I was untutored, you see. The garden man said, 'What you need is a couple of cherry blossoms.' I loved the words—'cherry blossom,' you know?" He succumbs to a deep, chesty laugh. "But a sense comes to you. It's a sense. It's a *sense*, a *sense* of what is correct. What I don't have, and the English usually like, are flowers. They love flowers. I can't *bear* them. I can't bear them except in shops. The colors are too, too— I like grass and I like trees." He fingers an enormous shrub. "This has an orange berry. I don't like it. I don't like it."

Abruptly, he turns to me, a mysterious look on his face. "I don't work in the garden now," he says dramatically, and then waits a beat, so that I can ask him why. I know that he has recently had back surgery to remove some bone spurs. (It makes me wonder about all those bridges.) But could that be the reason? "I've fallen out of love with it," he says, sighing profoundly. "I've fallen out of love with Wiltshire. It was a wonderful thing, living here. It helped me do my work, gave me the solitude and the quiet which I cherish, and the space. All that has gone wrong is that one has fallen out of love. And when I fall out of love with places I just hide from them. I'm thinking that probably it might be time to move on."

BY now, he is more Wiltshire than Trinidad—he has even lived here longer—but Trinidad remains his obsession, his crown of thorns. He may, in fact, have written about it a few times too often. "It's quite helpless, really," he says. "I can't do otherwise. I've lived there so long mentally. That leaving home was an immensity. I've been trying all my life to express that, the bigness of that. The central experience of my life." He was born in the country town of Chaguanas, on August 17, 1932; his grandfather, a Brahmin from the Gangetic Plain, had come there as an agricultural laborer. Vidia's father, Seepersad, whom he adored, was a high-strung man, prone to mental illness and breakdown; he was a journalist at the *Trinidad Guardian* and an impassioned, frustrated writer of short stories. Vidia

"Don't we think Arlene would make a perfect Medea?"

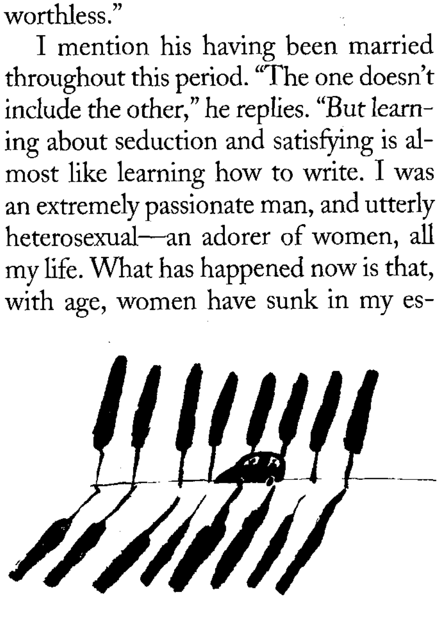
has always credited him with inspiring his own drive to be a writer, but in many ways it was Vidia's mother who was the dominating force: she came from a rich, enormous family, the Capildeos, with whom Vidia and his parents were often forced to live. "I suffered so much from those relationships," he says. "The family quarrels—I suffered immense torment about it, and that was linked with my wish to have my own space, to be away."

As a teen-ager, he became aloof, proud, satirical, rather like the boy Anand in "A House for Mr. Biswas," and some of the bulwarks that he devised against the discord around him stood him in good stead. In particular, he developed a memory exercise that he called "playing the newsreel back," which he has described as "trying to remember words, gestures and expressions in correct sequence, to arrive at an understanding of the people I had been with and the true meaning of what had been said." Groping for order, he taught himself to interpret handwriting, and even to read faces in an unusual way. "You learn to associate a kind of face with a kind of human behavior," he says. "So you store a lot. I don't keep a journal, because I prefer to let memory do its sifting. Otherwise, the detail and the self-consciousness of the journal will get in the way. And I remember something else. I would talk very fast as a child. I was famous for it. I would talk so fast that I would have the time to mouth again what I had said. I was about eight or nine at the time. Did it for a long time. I would speak a sentence, and I would repeat it to myself—the second time was silent. I think I was probably just checking, checking." The birth of the bis, perhaps.

Naipaul grew to hate what he viewed as the stunted life of colonial Trinidad, and the moment he could get out he did. In 1950, a scholarship sent him to University College, Oxford. "He was very nervous at first," Peter Bayley, his tutor, remembers. "But everyone recognized him as a remarkable person." His first-term report read: "Fluent and quick in thought and writing: sometimes too cavalier and blasé. This slightly contemptuous attitude could be a potential danger." Naipaul says he was popular at college, but he also remembers it as a time of misery, and in 1952 he suffered a mental breakdown. "It was solitude and wretchedness and depression—everything, every kind of obvious thing," he says. "They were wretched years—don't want to relive them at all. From when I left home, in '50, which I so much wanted to do, to about '58 or so was really a pretty dreadful period. Before I became secure as a writer, it was a long, unbroken period of melancholy."

He has written about the sorrow he experienced at his father's death—in 1953, when Vidia was twenty-one—and about the displacement he felt when he returned to Trinidad in 1956, only to scurry back to London, where, he now knew, he would try to make his career. He had married Pat by then, and was struggling to write, but he felt lost and inauthentic, and he was very, very poor. But there was something else as well. "There was a kind of tremendous sexual *soif*, very unfulfilled," he says. "And I was a very passionate man. I wasn't spurned; it was incompetence. I didn't know how to seduce the girl. There were many girls who were very friendly, and I didn't know how to cope with it. I was untutored. One would like to drive forward, but I didn't know how. I didn't know about the physical act of seduction, you see. I didn't know, because I'd never been told. I was too shy. And I don't know how people learn about the act of seduction, really; I still don't know. So I became a great prostitute man, which, as you know, is highly unsatisfactory. It's the most unsatisfying form of sex. Terrible. There is nothing in it." He is vehement now, almost hissing the words. "It's nothing; it's worthless. However much you tell yourself otherwise, it's worthless."

I mention his having been married throughout this period. "The one doesn't include the other," he replies. "But learning about seduction and satisfying is almost like learning how to write. I was an extremely passionate man, and utterly heterosexual—an adorer of women, all my life. What has happened now is that, with age, women have sunk in my esteem quite a bit. I'm no longer blinded by this way of looking at them. So in a way that's a kind of loss. One has lost this excitement about women. And probably one could say this about Muslim countries and other countries—that since old men make the laws, the laws tend to be rather harsh about women, because the blinding has faded away. But I adored women. I thought they were wonderful. I loved their voices. I loved the quality of their skin. I loved everything about them."



The books don't show it. Women have little place in them, and, when they appear, lust often degenerates into revulsion. Naipaul's friends remember periods when he swore off sex completely. "His sexual disgust is easily aroused," Paul Theroux says. "Sex disgusts him, and the things people eat, the way they look, how they smell. The disgust is very, very strong. A lot of the reminders of ordinary humanity—people tapping their feet to music, being aroused when a woman walks by, these things that are examples of people losing control—disgust him. They remind him of all the things he hated about Trinidad. They remind him of carnival time on the island."

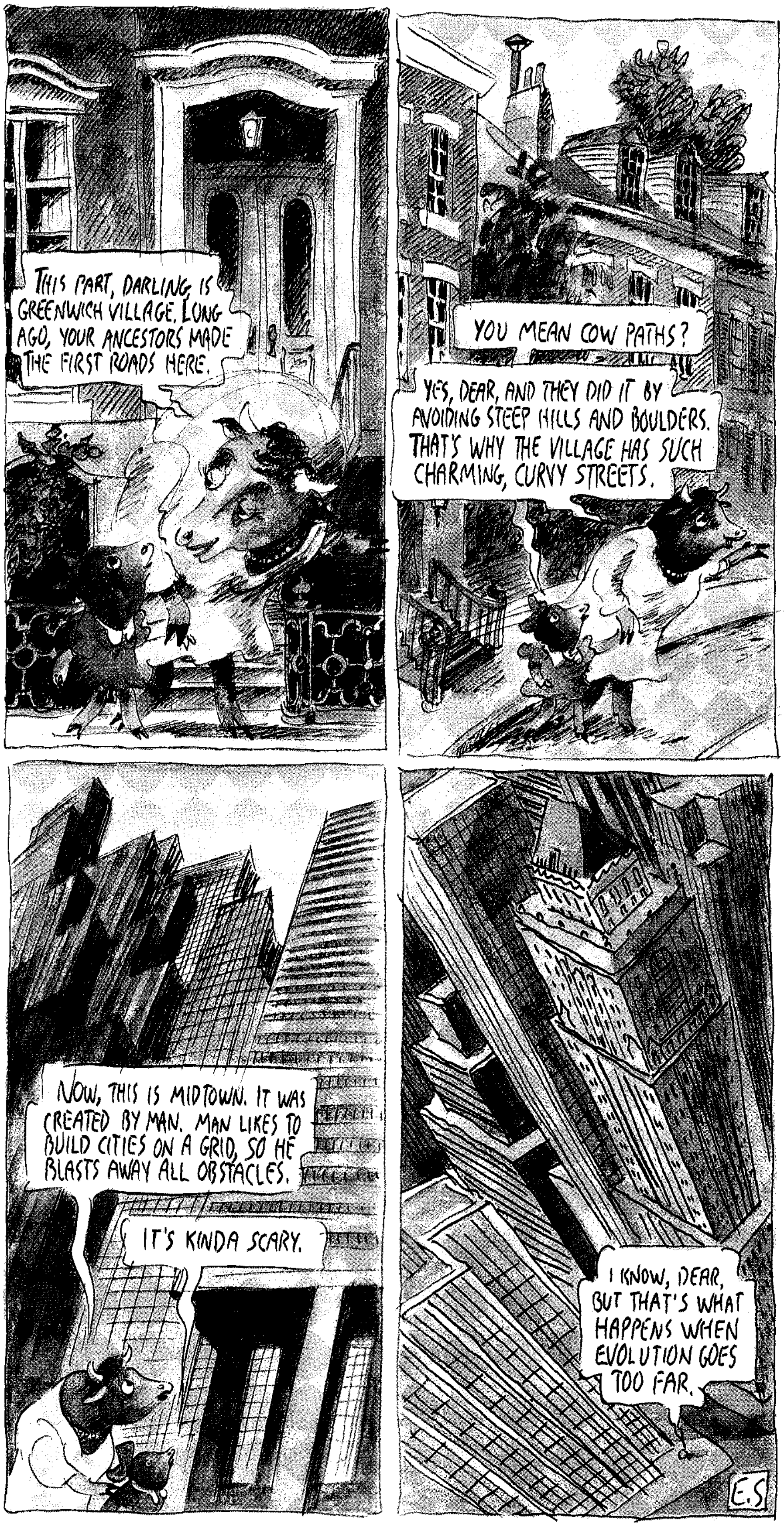
Eventually, though, during a trip to Argentina in the seventies, Naipaul's fortunes altered. "The sexual ease came quite late to me," he says. "And it came as an immense passion. Conrad has a lovely line: 'A man to whom love comes late, not as the most splendid of illusions, but like an enlightening and priceless misfortune.' So that came to me. And I feel that a lot of my creative energy has come from that. I'm most grateful, yes, I'm delighted to have had it. It would have been terrible to have died without it. So that didn't destroy the writer—it built him up a little bit. She was someone who didn't care a damn about my work, who'd never heard of me. Still hasn't read all of them—not all, not a[illegible]" Her name was Margaret, and she was an Argentine of British descent, a slender, attractive married woman (with three children) who was about ten years younger than Naipaul, and several inches taller. "Their meeting was instant magnetism," a friend says. "Their eyes just sort of locked." Remarkably, although Margaret doesn't live in England, the relationship has continued over the years; she has often joined Naipaul during his travels, and she stayed with him during the two semesters in the late seventies when he taught at Wesleyan University, in Connecticut.

By that time, of course, he was a famous man, but financial well-being was a long time in coming. His books didn't attract notice in America until he published "Guerrillas" here in the mid-seventies—nearly twenty years after his first novel, "The Mystic Masseur," appeared in England. And though he is financially comfortable now, he knows he will never be a best-seller; in fact, money is something of an obsession with him. He likes to quiz people about it; he once perturbed the filmmaker George Lucas by asking him just how much he made. Pointing to his house in Wiltshire, Naipaul told me, "I paid all of forty-four thousand pounds for it—that's eighty-eight thousand dollars. In 1979." He laughed hugely. "This gave me the reputation of being a very shrewd man, a very shrewd investor."

THAT was fifteen years ago. He moved into the house three years later, and the twelve years he has been there have produced a profound change in his work. If the comic novels and stories about Trinidad, climaxing with "A House for Mr. Biswas," constitute his early period, and the blistering fictions and nonfictions about exile and alienation in the Third World constitute a middle period, then the last ten years have introduced an adventurous new phase. With "Finding the Center," in 1984, Naipaul began to write more directly about his own life: about his boyhood; about his early attempts to will himself into his vocation; about the torturous path he took toward discovering his form and his voice. Naipaul had always been regarded as a rather traditional storyteller, but in the early eighties he began to tinker with the form, and in 1987 he produced a strange and beautiful "novel"—a masterpiece, in fact—called "The Enigma of Arrival." Dense, difficult, yet oddly tender, the book rewarded study more than casual reading. At first glance, it seemed to be half autobiography—once again, the trials of the clueless colonial learning to write—and half a portrait of Wiltshire life: Naipaul's cottage, the grounds, the neighbors, their woes. The incidents he was describing were banal, seemingly

BOVINE PRIDE

by Edward Sorel


THIS PART, DARLING, IS GREENWICH VILLAGE. LONG AGO, YOUR ANCESTORS MADE THE FIRST ROADS HERE.
YOU MEAN COW PATHS?
YES, DEAR, AND THEY DID IT BY AVOIDING STEEP HILLS AND BOULDERS. THAT'S WHY THE VILLAGE HAS SUCH CHARMING, CURVY STREETS.
NOW, THIS IS MIDTOWN. IT WAS CREATED BY MAN. MAN LIKES TO BUILD CITIES ON A GRID, SO HE BLASTS AWAY ALL OBSTACLES.
IT'S KINDA SCARY.
I KNOW, DEAR, BUT THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVOLUTION GOES TOO FAR.
E.S.

unworthy of Naipaul's redoubtable eye. But the writing had a slow, almost Mahleresque majesty—something that Naipaul had never quite achieved before. It came at the reader in repeating waves, depositing bits of information, and then receding, only to surge forward again, a little farther this time, depositing a little bit more. Gradually, you came to realize that Naipaul was writing about nothing less than the life of the mind—but in an almost epistemological sense. He was letting his reader in on the writer's way of knowing, of piecing together what he sees, drawing conclusions, tearing them up, amending them, seeing more. Far from being a traditional novel, "The Enigma of Arrival" was a cutaway view of narrative itself, as though the story it told were just a crust beneath which the reader could watch the shifting plates of a writer's consciousness.

STILL-LIFE WITH POTATOES, PEARLS, RAW MEAT, RHINESTONES, LARD, AND HORSE HOOVES

In Spanish it's *naturaleza muerta* and not life at all.
But certainly not natural. What's natural?
You and me. I'll buy you a drink.
To a woman who doesn't act like a woman.
To a man who doesn't act like a man.
Death is natural, at least in Spanish, I think.
Life? I'm not so sure.
Consider the Contessa, who in her time was lovely
and now sports a wart the size of this diamond.
So, *ragazzo*, you're Venice.
To you. To Venice.
Not the one of Casanova.
The other one of cheap *pensiones* by the railway station.
I recommend a narrow bed stained with semen, pee, and sorrow facing the wall.
Stain and decay are romantic.
You're positively Pasolini.
Likely to dangle and fandango yourself to death.
If we let you. I won't let you!
Not to be outdone, I'm Piazzolla.
I'll tango for you in a lace G-string
stained with my first-day flow
and one sloppy tit leaping like a Niagara from my dress.
Did you say duress or dress?
Let's sing a Puccini duet—I like "La Traviesa."
I'll be your trained monkey.
I'll be sequin and bangle.
I'll be Mae, Joan, Bette, Marlene for you—
I'll be anything you ask. But ask me something glamorous.
Only make me laugh.
Another?
What I want to say, *querido*, is
hunger is not romantic to the hungry.
What I want to say is
fear is not so thrilling if you're the one afraid.

His journalism had prepared him. He had spent years trekking through Africa, India, South America, the Near and Far East, observing and interviewing, writing exact descriptions and analyses of what he saw, and then turning around a few years later and reworking them into fictions. An article entitled "The Killings in Trinidad," about the depredations of a would-be revolutionary who called himself Michael X, was transmuted into "Guerrillas," and an article about Mobutu and the Congo grew into "A Bend in the River." Naipaul was never an inventor of material, always a transformer; he had little respect for many of the time-honored building blocks of fiction—myth, fantasy, fairy tale, invention, even the gift of storytelling itself. "I wouldn't know what the point of all that is," he told me. "I don't want to be excited by suspense—I don't need that kind of thing." And myth? Fairy tale? "Un*bear*able. Have you tried reading the Grimms' fairy tales in any bulk? Un*bear*able. Too irrational. You can go on forever. It's like a Henry Moore sculpture—you can just add things all the time. There's no reason it should ever stop. It's too arbitrary. And it doesn't illuminate anything. I think the early people who used the fictional form used it to illuminate things that the other forms couldn't do. To write about the Russian society, you would only have had the official report or the travel book. So you needed another kind of writing to explore it. And without Balzac people wouldn't have understood what France had become. But that's done. You can't go and do it again."

Narrative, though, is something different. "It occurs all the time," Naipaul said. "Your coming here is narrative. You know, the man who drove you here is narrative. It's all narrative. It's a matter of choosing. It's when you're doing the other kind of writing—you start looking for a thing called plot and you get into trouble, you know? Narrative is something large going on around you all the time. Plot is something so trivial—people want it for television plays. Plot assumes that the world has been explored and now this thing, plot, has to be added on. Whereas I am still exploring the world. And there is narrative there, in every exploration. The writers of plots know the world. I don't know the world yet. I began to understand that quite late. I began to understand the full richness of the world that I was in the middle of, and how to go about it."

What he understood might have eluded another writer, but Naipaul had prepared his own way well. Moving from Oxford to London in 1954, taking jobs at the BBC and at the Cement-and-Concrete Association (writing public-relations copy) to support himself, he aspired to become a writer, without really having anything to write about. His first approach was to pretend to be something

What I want to say is
poverty's not quaint when it's your house you can't escape from.
Decay's not beautiful to the decayed.
What's beauty?
Lipstick on a penis.
A kiss on a running sore.
A reptile stiletto that could puncture a heart.
A brick through the windshield that means I love you.
A hurt that bangs on the door.
Look, I hate to break this to you, but this isn't Venice or Buenos Aires.
This is San Antonio.
That mirror isn't a yard sale.
It's a fire. And these are remnants
of what could be carried out and saved.
The pearls? I bought them at the Winn's.
My mink? Genuine acrylic.
Thank God this isn't Berlin.
Another drink?
Bartender, another bottle, but—
¡Ay caray! and oh dear!
The pretty blond boy is no longer serving us.
To the death camps! To the death camps!
How rude! How vulgar!
Drink up, honey. I've got money.
Doesn't he know who we are?
Que vivan los de abajo de los de abajo,
los de rienda suelta, the witches, the women,
the dangerous, the queer.
Que vivan las perras.
"*Que me sirvan otro trago . . .*"
I know a bar where they'll buy us drinks
if I wear my skirt on my head and you come in wearing nothing
but my black brassiere.

—SANDRA CISNEROS

he was not—a cosmopolitan Londoner, not an Indian from Trinidad who had grown up in what he persists in calling "the bush." Slowly, he found his way; slowly, he learned to let his memory, rather than his pretension, speak. But what disturbed him most was the stricture of form—the need to produce plots, stories, characters, the traditional rhythms of the novel. "What was worrying me was the unnaturalness of it," he says. "It was: Why am I doing this? Why do I have to write these invented stories? And it worried me how to move on. And I remember I was on a trip to India, nervous about going on as a writer. And on the freighter I began to be worried, almost in the way of neurosis, that I was losing the gift of speech. Very few passengers, and I had that fear. This is the depth of one's worry. But now all my forms are my own. I will not let anyone tell me that I must have people coming in through the door and describe the room, and then, you know, the kind of writing where you have one operative line in a paragraph, or you have one in a page, so people know what's happening. Page 1: He's coming to the flat. Page 2: There is a banker in the flat. And it goes on like that. No, my writing is something else now. It is carefully done, like a watch."

He is a great hater of style in prose. "I don't like things where the writer is shouting 'Look at me!' I want the writer not to be there. The writer has to take me, rather like Pepys. He's not there; I have to read through him. Santayana: almost unreadable. Gibbon lulls one to sleep. The King James Bible: unbearable—un*bear*able. The rhythm, and the killing of sense, the killing of sense. I like good, brambly writers. Richard Jefferies—he's a good writer. So many observations, knitted in very quickly. Sharp, edgy; the writing seems a little awkward, but in fact a lot is being delivered. I don't like smooth things—I can't bear smoothness. Dryden is smooth. And I dislike things with rhythm. I think prose shouldn't have rhythm. The writer should break it up if he spots it—break it up! In my writing, there's no self-consciousness, there's no beauty. The writer is saying, 'Pay attention. Everything is here for a purpose. Please don't hurry through it.' If you race through it, of course you can't get it, because it was written so slowly. It requires another kind of reading. You must read it at the rate, perhaps, at which the writer himself likes to read books. Twenty, thirty pages a day, because you can't cope with more. You've got to rest after reading twenty good pages. You've got to stop and think. I read very slowly. It's very natural. My paragraphs are very rich—they have to be read. Many things are happening in the paragraph. If you miss a paragraph—if you miss a page—it's hard to get back into it."

This is especially true of "The Enigma of Arrival" and the books that have followed it. With "A Turn in the South" (1989), a record of his journey through the Southern United States, and "India: A Million Mutinies Now" (1990), the third in a trilogy of travel books about that country, Naipaul began to rely more and more on interviews, on building a collage out of dozens of voices, with his own voice providing dense, analytical commentary in between. The books are surprisingly gentle, almost anodyne; they reveal a writer whom age and experience have tempered. In "A Turn in the South" Naipaul is virtually gaga about redneck culture and country-music lyrics and black church choirs. There is little about racism in it. And in "A Million Mutinies Now" the horror and contempt that racked "An Area of Darkness" and "India: A Wounded Civilization" have been replaced by a kind of hope: unlike practically any other recent observer of the subcontinent, Naipaul feels encouraged by a newly literate India's awakening to its own history, even if that awakening arouses rage.

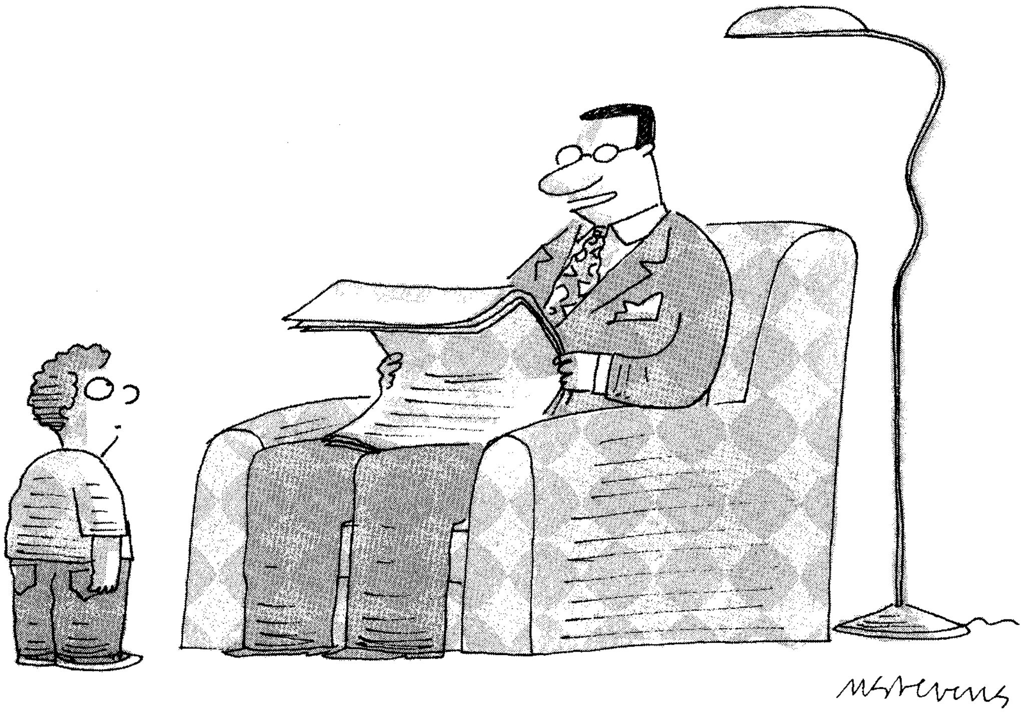
These books lead up to the new one, "A Way in the World," in which Naipaul attempts to transfer the nonfiction technique he has developed—the collage of voices—to a work of fiction. It's a bumpy ride. Although Naipaul has in the past proved himself adept at capturing the sound of Trinidad's pidgin, and even of American Southern accents, the voices in this book—whether of a Trinidadian schoolteacher, a seventeenth-century Amerindian, or Francisco de Miranda himself—all sound like Naipaul, and not like Naipaul talking but like Naipaul writing. The sections he is happiest with are the longest ones, about Raleigh and Miranda, but they prove the least convincing: in forcing the historical characters to recount their own histories, Naipaul hoped to bring a new emotion and a new empathy to tales he had already told in "The Loss of El Dorado," but instead he has found himself falling between two stools: the historical details feel sketchy; the emotion feels wan and trumped up.

Still, Naipaul is terribly proud of this book—"I will be quite content if this is my last work, quite content," he told me—and there is a lot here to be proud of. Almost everything in its nine disparate sections links up with everything else, and what emerges is a kind of chain in four dimensions, coiled and crisscrossed over the centuries, enmeshing dozens of lives and fates that happened to traverse a single West Indian patch of land and sea. For all its flaws, "A Way in the World" is a true summing up. In it Naipaul musters a compassion that is a very far cry from the sullenness of the middle period: here his sympathy can encompass slaves, revolutionaries, aboriginals, and white marauders alike, because all of them are victims—victims of the dreams, lies, lusts, and rages that are, in Naipaul's view, the true forces of history. In fact, it is history itself that is the protagonist here, and Naipaul keeps twisting it in the light like a crystal, letting its various facets glint. In one passage he describes returning to Port of Spain in the aftermath of a bloody rebellion in 1990, a rebellion that spread and subsided in the very streets and buildings where, years before, he had worked as a clerk, making copies of birth, marriage, and death certificates—the documents of history:

> It was unsettling to see what had been city—regulated, serviced, protected, full of wonder and the possibility of adventure—turn to vacancy, simple ground. The commercial streets of the centre had been levelled. You could see down to what might have been thought buried forever: the thick-walled eighteenth-century Spanish foundations of some buildings. You could see the low gable marks of early, small buildings against higher walls. You could look down, in fact, at more than Spanish foundations: you could look down at red Amerindian soil.

The perpetuity of history: if Naipaul could be said to have a religion, that would be its ruling tenet. For him, the knowledge of history is a humanizing influence—humanizing in the sense of making humane. Writing about Islamic fundamentalism, in an essay called "Our Universal Civilization," he says, "The faith abolished the past. And when the past was abolished like this, more than an idea of history suffered. Human behavior, and ideals of good behavior, could suffer." History for Naipaul is a kind of order, a bastion against the chaos, personal and political, that he has despised all his life—ever since he found himself in the midst of it, among the squalling children and carnival lights back in Port of Spain.

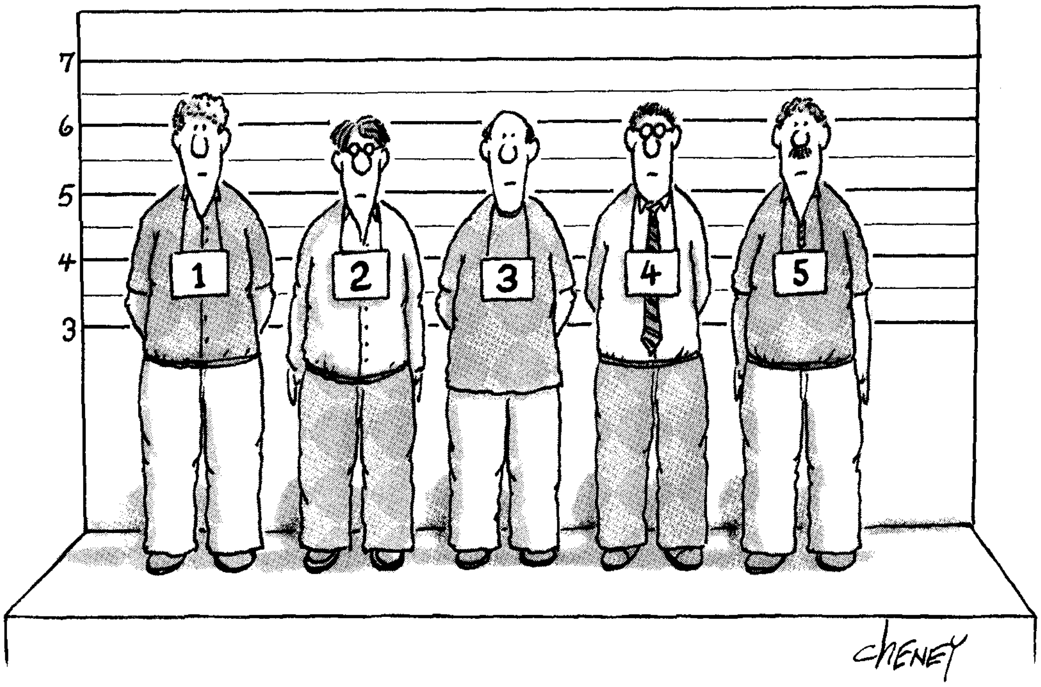
And here is where his argument against those who wish to save the Third World begins. Most such saviors are ideologues, and Naipaul hates any ideology—Marxist, Maoist, Muslim, or Africanist—that wishes to wipe away history. He values order, yes, but order alone is not enough; he prefers India, where there are "a million mutinies now," to the Iran of the fundamentalists, where order itself has become a kind of chaos—by being arbitrary, by being illogical, by being deaf to human need. Naipaul's detractors have seen him as a sort of uppity wog, a dark-skinned colonial "passing" as a pillar of the empire—or, to use Edward Said's word, a "scavenger." This is a large oversimplification. It is true that Naipaul has regarded most indigenous Third World liberators with a cold eye, but history has borne him out on that point, and there is nothing in his work that suggests a love of imperialism. It is also true that Naipaul has been squeamish about, and even contemptuous of, Third World squalor. That, I think, is a matter of temperament more than a matter of belief. Naipaul was brought up a colonial in a caste society; he



"Your allowance is in the mail."

was reared with a thousand associations that made his skin crawl; he is a neurotic, a fussbudget—and that is the sort of characteristic that no amount of "progressive" thinking can be expected to alter. He cannot necessarily bring himself to enjoy the company of victims, but victims are not what enrages him; what enrages him is the societies that victimize. After all, he has been there.

In his London apartment one day, he showed me a few of the magnificent Indian paintings he collects. His aesthetic is consistent: in art, as in writing, he has very little use for invention, stylization, or charm. What he admires is skill, naturalism, observation, draftsmanship: order. A critic of a certain kind might call this bias of his Western, or European, but the art he showed me belied that notion: it may not be "charmingly" Indian, but Indian it is. And then he said something very interesting. We were looking at a delicate portrait of Shah Jahan, the builder of the Taj Mahal. "I think the most important thing about that picture is its condition," Naipaul said. "The eyes, the lips, the ears—very fine. But then it's so damaged around the head. And it's awful to say that within a hundred years of that picture being done and being locked away in the prince's library, it was plundered. And it was because that prince hadn't created a state. He hadn't created institutions to protect the painting, and, in a similar way, he hadn't protected his people. All that art, all that training, all that talent, and it's for the prince alone. It doesn't educate the country—it's part of nothing else, because the prince has provided nothing that will remain when he has been wiped away. When I make this point to scholars of Indian art, they think I'm making some antique point about Indians being barbarous and uncivilized. They're incapable of understanding what I'm saying—that all that energy should have gone into creating a self-aware, analytical society with its own intellectual possibilities."



"Number Three, take one step forward and say, 'I thought this was the smoking section.' "

Is Naipaul, then, a lover of Western civilization, of the civilization now frequently derided as having been built by dead white males? He is, unashamedly, but not because of any racial bias. As I read his work, it occurs to me that his litmus test for a desirable society would be as deceptively simple as this: Is it a society that someone like V. S. Naipaul could be a writer in? That is not a bad criterion. For instance, would he have the freedom to write, regardless of his origins? Could he become educated enough to write, also regardless of his origins? Would the society be intellectually alive enough to produce readers? Would its economy and system of government allow publication? Finally—and here even we are in danger—would the society make him want to write, and write well? Would it make producing good writing seem a desirable pursuit?

This last requisite, of course, was available to Naipaul even in Trinidad, thanks to his father's influence. It is the thing that brought him to England. But now I have one more question for him. He has talked of starting out poor, of being miserable and sexually incompetent. Yet I still can't fathom the pain that turned the boyish sprite in that early photograph into the baleful, stringent presence that so took Bellow aback. Young writers have always put themselves through hell. Was Naipaul's hell any worse?

He ponders for a moment. Then he says, "It was that I had no gift. I had no natural talent. I was waiting for something to come, waiting for it to infuse me, to enter me. And, of course, it isn't like that. So my writing was always learned. And I think the body of work exists because there was no natural gift. I think if I had had a natural gift it would have been for mimicry. I would have been mimicking other people's forms. No, I really had to work. I had to learn it. Having to learn it, I became my own man."

But if he had no natural talent, how could he have surpassed so many others—others putatively more gifted than he? Was it just hard work?

"Not that alone," he says. "There was also the element of panic. I was more frightened than anybody else. I *had* to do it. Other people have other causes of self-esteem, which they always bring into play. I had none. Other people think about their money, their background, their education, their motorcars. I didn't. You say you want to be a writer, you want to be a writer. How do you start? You sit down and you pretend you are writing. But it is so dreadful to pretend you are writing. What are you doing? Well, I think I'm writing. And then the day comes when you don't say, 'I think I'm writing.' You say, 'I'm working.' Big day. Very big day. Others didn't have the panic. But I had to become a writer very fast. I had to learn it. I had nothing else." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE TEMPLE AND THE PALACE

Three czars spent forty-five years and a vast fortune erecting the massive Temple of Christ the Saviour. The church became Moscow's Notre Dame, its St. Peter's Basilica. Worshippers flocked to it to offer thanks to God for saving Russia. And it gave Joseph Stalin ideas.

BY RYSZARD KAPUŚCIŃSKI

No matter how many times I pass that way, I cannot tear my eyes away from the place. I stare intently, as if I wanted to see something, through the mist, through time, although, of course, there is nothing to see.

To get there, driving along Leninski Prospekt (where I live) toward the center of Moscow, one must cross Bolshoi Kamenny Most ("Big Stone Bridge," in Russian) and immediately turn downhill to the right, then right again, and emerge on the Kropotkinskaya Naberezhnaya, which runs along the river. The site is just after the traffic lights, directly beyond the high viaduct, enclosed by a fence.

In the winter, clouds of white steam rise from it. The steam comes from a large swimming pool that remains open year round, because the water is heated. When the air reaches −20° Fahrenheit, the swimming pool becomes a paradise for a special category of people, whose greatest satisfaction in life comes from being able to bathe in an open-air pool in such freezing weather. And they live! You can see how satisfied they are with themselves from the way they climb out of the heated water and strut along the edge of the pool: their movements are energetic, their silhouettes firm, chests thrust forward, heads held high.

The fall of 1812. Napoleon, leading his crushed and decimated army, has abandoned Moscow and is fleeing Russia. He has suffered a shattering defeat. The Russians are broadening their offensive, they are triumphing. To express gratitude to Providence for having "rescued Russia from the ruin threatening her," the czar, Alexander I, decides to construct in Moscow a temple in the name of the one who saved Russia—in the name of Christ the Saviour.

The scale of the temple is to reflect the Czar's gratitude to the Son of God: it will be gigantic.

But perhaps because the Czar was busy with the conquest of Azerbaijan and Bessarabia—perhaps also because of ordinary forgetfulness—the temple was not erected during his lifetime. It was not until 1830, the fifth year of the reign of Alexander I's successor and brother, Nicholas I, that the idea of constructing the temple of gratitude was taken up anew. Two years later, Nicholas I approved a design presented to him by the architect Konstantin Ton; for the next six years, the Czar deliberated over where to build this temple. He finally decided on the very site where, today, people swimming in an open-air pool during frosty weather display their courage and stamina.

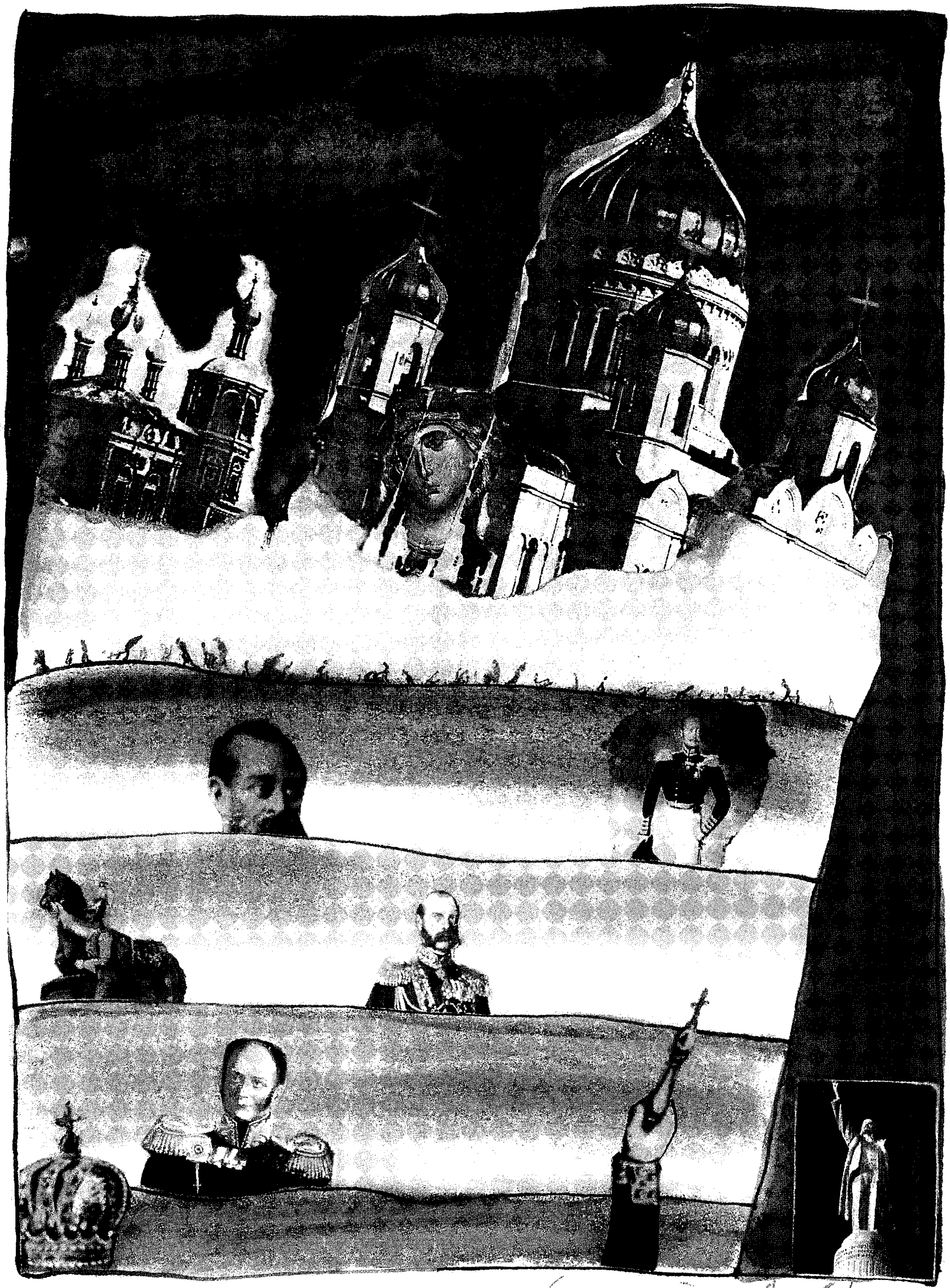
Before long, the Czar formed the Committee for the Construction of the Temple of Christ the Saviour, and work began on a grand scale.

Construction went on for forty-five years. Nicholas I was in charge until 1855, when he died under mysterious circumstances. The father's work was carried on by the son, Czar Alexander II, until he died, in a bombing incident, in March, 1881. Fortunately, the next czar, Alexander III, the son of Alexander II, also displayed an abiding and fervent solicitude for the project. Each imperator lavished time and money unstintingly upon this ambitious and seemingly eternal project. Not just Moscow, not just Russia, but the entire world watched the construction with astonishment and speechless admiration. Czars came and went, old generations died off and new ones populated the earth, Russia threw herself into the chaos of wars and conquests, suffered recurring waves of famine and epidemic, and yet nothing interrupted the effort to complete this extraordinary structure.

The consecration of the temple takes place in the presence of Czar Alexander III on the twenty-sixth of May, 1883. Although the exterior of the building, having arisen for years before everyone's eyes, is by now well known, those at last entering the interior utter a cry of rapture. The architectural specifications—cited by Irina Ilovaiskaya-Alberti in her introduction to a book of photographs of the temple—make readily comprehensible this mood of transport and ecstasy: The Temple of Christ the Saviour is more than thirty stories tall. Its walls are three and two-tenths metres thick; they were built of forty million bricks. These walls—on the outside and on the inside—are covered with slabs of Altaic and Podolia marble and Finnish granite. The slabs are attached to the bricks along the entire surface of the temple with the help of special lead grips. The shrine is crowned by a gigantic cupola, covered with sheets of copper that weigh a hundred and seventy-six tons. On the summit stands a cross three stories high. The cupola is surrounded by four belfries, in which hang fourteen bells with a combined weight of sixty-five tons. The main bell weighs twenty-seven tons. Twelve doors sculpted in bronze lead to the interior of the church. Their combined weight is a hundred and forty tons.

Most impressive is the interior. It is lit by candles placed in three thousand candleholders. And because the faithful enter the church and light their own candles in accordance with the Orthodox custom—and this building can hold up to fifteen thousand worshippers at a time—its windows glow for a great distance.

What's inside? Upon entering, you

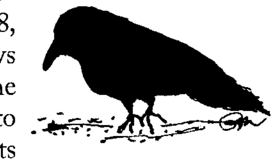


see before you an enormous and dazzling iconostasis, decorated with gold. The iconostasis reflects the shimmering light of those thousands of beeswax candles, and its intense, commanding brilliance imbues you with humility and awe.

The lower portions of the walls are covered with a hundred and seventy-seven marble plates, on which the following particulars have been engraved: the dates and places of the battles of the Russian Army; the names of the regiments and divisions fighting there; the names of their commanders; the numbers of casualties; the names of those who received various decorations, and, separately, those who received the Cross of St. George.

Higher up, above the marble plates, up to the summit of the cupola, the surface of the walls is covered with frescoes, painted by means of a special technique on white plaster. There are portraits of the saints there, scenes from the life of Christ and the Apostles, Biblical motifs. The authors of these works are among the most famous Russian painters of the epoch—Bruni and Vereshchagin, Kramskoy and Litovchenko, Sedov and Surikov.

THIS magnificent shrine, unique as an architectural specimen and a glorious achievement of Russian art, existed for forty-eight years—until the middle of 1931, when Stalin decided to raze it. This he did not do in a coarse manner; he did not make an announcement such as "And now we will raze the Temple of Christ the Saviour." Certainly not. Instead, on July 18, 1931, *Izvestiya* ran a news item to the effect that the government had decided to build a Palace of the Soviets in Moscow. The item also mentioned that this palace was to be erected on the site where the temple stood. Why precisely in this place? Moscow is, after all, an enormous city; there were many empty areas in it; there were even empty lots near the Kremlin; one could have chosen any number of truly excellent locations. But no: what was wanted was precisely that patch of ground on which stood the Temple of Christ the Saviour.



And so Stalin orders the largest sacred object in Moscow to be razed. The year, again, is 1931. Imagine, for a moment, that Poland's Marshal Józef Piłsudski orders the Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa to be razed. Imagine that Mussolini, who at this time rules Italy, orders St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to be razed. Let us imagine that Paul Doumer, who is the President of France, orders the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris to be razed. Can you?

Quickly, workmen enclose the enormous site of the temple with a fence, and by morning they have set to work. Acoustically speaking, one could divide the labor of demolishing the temple into a quiet stage and a noisy stage. During the quiet stage, the regime robs the temple. We know what treasures were in this church. Almost half a ton of gold alone. And how many tons of silver, brass, enamel, amethyst? How many priceless icons and ornate Gospels, how many staffs and censers? And the collections of liturgical vestments woven with gold and silver, those mitres, chasubles, and belts set with precious stones?

Taking down the marble was the hardest job. The marble, fastened with lead to the brick walls, did not want to give, could not be torn away. Its removal lasted weeks, and we do not know whether the delay irritated Stalin. It would be a wonder if it did. For during this time Stalin had a great many things on his mind. First and foremost, he was directing the campaign that would culminate in the death of as many as ten million people in the Ukraine by starvation. The killing of ten million people, given the then current state of technology, was no easy matter. They did not know about gas chambers; they did not know about nuclear weapons. We do know that the course of this campaign was of special interest to Stalin. He was a suspicious, untrusting man, who read the dispatches from the Ukraine himself, scolded the sluggish, issued new instructions and decrees; all this must have placed considerable demands upon his time and energy.

At the same time, Stalin was keeping close watch on the ambitious expansion of the network of labor camps—a daunting task in such a huge country, and all the more so if one considers the intemperate climate, the immensity of the transportation difficulties, and the shortage of all building materials. And time was pressing: the Leader was already plotting the first purge; the millions of condemned had to be put somewhere. Under the circumstances, it would be hard to blame Stalin if, for example, he relaxed somewhat his attentive supervision of the destruction of the Temple of Christ the Saviour. He was already over fifty, after all, and surely felt in his bones the years of murderous struggle for power.

But no: from all indications, Stalin's vigilance in the matter never slackened. He must have realized the dimensions of the challenge he and his people confronted. The goal was, after all, to raze, using only very backward and primitive techniques, in barely four months (such was the deadline set for the undertaking), a monument that was built with extraordinary effort and sacrifice over the course of forty-five years. But even this would prove possible.

When the temple was stripped of everything that could be carried off from its dazzlingly sumptuous interior, from its treasury and vestry, from its closets and secret receptacles, altars and belfries, stripped of everything that could be torn from the iconostasis, from the walls and doors, everything that could be hammered off, chopped away, screwed off, pulled out, forced out, gouged out, or broken off—when, as I say, the dexterous brigades, working day and night, finally accomplished their feat of plunder, they saw before them an overwhelming sight. There they were, standing inside a gigantic, gloomy, and repellent shell of bricks, to which here and there, like insects on the skin of a monstrous beast, clung the figures of workmen on scaffoldings.

THE second act of the drama of the Temple of Christ the Saviour begins. So far, the object has been to plunder and deface it. But now a technical problem arises: how to tear down such a gigantic structure standing in the center of the city. It would be simplest to bomb it, but this is out of the question, since near the church are situated various embassies—and, most important, the Kremlin is not far away. What if the pilot were to miss?

There are, of course, sufficient stores of dynamite in the warehouses of the Red Army to place charges under the temple and blow up the entire structure. But what if one miscalculates and blows

"Harry's mood stabilized in '78, and it hasn't budged since."

• •

up half the city and—worst of all—the Kremlin?

With great presence of mind, they finally decide to experiment. They drill a hole and put in a stick of explosives. A flash, a bang, a rising cloud of dust. When the cloud settles, they gather around, look, measure how much was torn out. Now they drill a larger hole and put in two sticks. A correspondingly brighter flash, a larger bang, more dust. And so on, step after step, stick after stick, metre after metre. Now they knock down a piece of the cupola; now they explode the summit of a belfry; now they crumble a fragment of a wall. They are counting on these shocks to so rock the entire edifice, to so loosen and weaken its structure, that later one strong charge will suffice to level the great temple.

And what do the more than two million inhabitants of Moscow say about this? After all, it is their Jasna Góra Monastery that is being torn down, their St. Peter's Basilica, their Cathedral of Notre Dame. What do they say? Nothing at all. Life goes on. In the morning, adults hurry to work; children go to school; grandmothers go stand in lines. More and more frequently, a family member is taken away, now a friend from work, now a neighbor. That's life.

Only the residents of houses next door to the temple seem to take an interest. In spare moments, they walk out onto their balconies or clamber up to the roofs of their buildings and observe the work of the wreckers—the dynamiters and those who with hammers smash the statues of saints, the portals, the cornices.

No one protests, demonstrates, pickets. And, anyway, Stalin would not tolerate such things.

THE death of the temple takes place on December 5, 1931. Since before dawn, the city has been rocked by powerful detonations. In the afternoon, a tall, smoking mountain of rubble lies where the church had stood. "A terrifying silence reigned in this place," notes one of the witnesses of the event. A heavy cloud of smoke and dust rises above Moscow. The only photographs that I have seen from that day are so blurred and faded that it is difficult even to see that it was already winter, difficult to tell whether there was snow on the ground.

A COMPETITION was immediately announced for the design of the Palace of the Soviets, which would rise from the ruins of the Temple of Christ the Saviour. From among the proposals submitted, Stalin at once selected the work of two architects—Iofan and Shchuko. We cannot say for sure whether Stalin had told them what he had in mind or whether Iofan and Shchuko themselves had simply surmised the General Secretary's greatest ambition and fondest dream. In any case, the greatest ambition and fondest dream of Stalin was the greatest ambition and fondest dream of all Soviet leaders; namely, to catch up with and surpass the United States.

Of course, England and France and Germany and Italy are important, but on the map of the world these are all small countries, even very small ones. Only America is large. What sort of honor is it, for a power like the U.S.S.R., to surpass France? Surpassing America, on the other hand—well, that's something.

Naturally, Stalin understands that he cannot surpass America in something like highway construction or automobile production. But he believes that it is possible to identify areas in which, if one gathers all one's resources, one can not just catch up with the United States but leave it behind! Following this thought, cleverly surmised by Iofan and Shchuko, he arrives at the conclusion that he could tweak America's nose by constructing a building larger than the Empire State Building, at the time the highest edifice in the United States. And it will reach this height by serving as a pedestal for a sculpture taller than the Statue of Liberty.

On June 4, 1933, Stalin signs the go-ahead on Iofan and Shchuko's design, thus launching his bold challenge to America. To be exact, the Palace of the Soviets will be six times as massive as the Empire State Building, and crowning it will be a statue of Lenin more than twice as tall (more than one hundred metres) and two and a half times as heavy as the Statue of Liberty. Other impressive specifications: the height of the palace together with the statue of Lenin at its top, four hundred and fifteen metres (around a hundred and thirty stories); the weight of the palace, one and a half million tons; the capacity of the palace, seven million cubic metres, which, according to Irina Ilovaiskaya-Alberti, equals the combined capacities of New York's then six largest skyscrapers. The statue of Lenin, too, would be a thing to behold: the length of the index finger of Vladimir Ilyich, six metres; the length of the foot, fourteen metres; the width of the shoulders, thirty-two metres; the weight of the statue, six thousand tons.

June, 1933, was one of those months when the fields and roads of the Ukraine were strewn with tens of thousands of corpses of people who had perished from hunger, and when there were incidents (today coming to light) of women, crazed with hunger, eating their own children. Moreover, people were dying of hunger not only in the Ukraine. They were dying in the Volga region and the Kuban, and also in Siberia, in the Urals, and by the White Sea. All this was taking place at the same period: as the temple was demolished and plans were drafted to erect its successor, famine was claiming the lives of millions.

But the question remains: Why was the Palace of the Soviets to be erected precisely where the Temple of Christ the Saviour had stood? (Let us add that the temple stood on extremely poor ground, porous and constantly underrun by water. It was treacherous soil for building on, pushing up the costs of construction.)

The explanation that atheism now ruled, that a struggle was being waged against religion, that churches and monasteries were being closed was, of course, correct, but it didn't account for everything. After all, there still were churches in Moscow—there were even churches in the Kremlin—and yet the Leader's finger came to rest on just this one place, where there towered the spectacular silhouette of the temple built by the Czars of Greater Russia to thank God for forcing Napoleon to retreat and saving their imperium.

The czar is both man and God—in this dual nature of Russia's highest authority lay stability, longevity, and strength. Only he who maintains (and has somehow proved) that his authority has a human and divine nature can rule here, can lead the people and count on their obedience and devotion. That is why Russian history is so thickly populated with pretender czars, false prophets, haunted and fanatical holy men: claiming to be touched by the hand of God, they claim, too, the power to rule souls. The hand of God is taken to be the sole legitimation of power.

The Bolsheviks attempt to fit into this tradition, to draw from its well-established power. Bolshevism is, of course, yet another pretender, but a pretender that goes a step further: not only is it the earthly reflection of God, it is God. To achieve this status, to transform oneself into the new God, one must demolish the houses of the former God (demolish them or strip them of their holiness, converting them into fuel dumps or furniture warehouses) and, on their foundations, raise new temples, new objects of admiration and worship—houses of the Party, Palaces of the Soviets. In this transformation, one effects a simple but radical exchange of symbols. In the place where a church stood, a Party building now stands; in the place where, consumed with ardent faith, you paid homage to the Almighty who is in Heaven, you will now pay homage to the Almighty who is on earth. In short, the background scenery changes, but the main principle of history, which continues to operate in the foreground, remains unchanged—the principle of the cult. Thus, it is no coincidence that after Stalin's death the critics of his rule reached for terminology from the theological dictionary, pronouncing on the cult of personality. As the Russian historian Roy Medvedev writes, Stalin "helped create on the foundation of Marxism something akin to religion, . . . and the almighty, all-knowing, and dangerous God of the new religion was proclaimed to be Stalin himself."

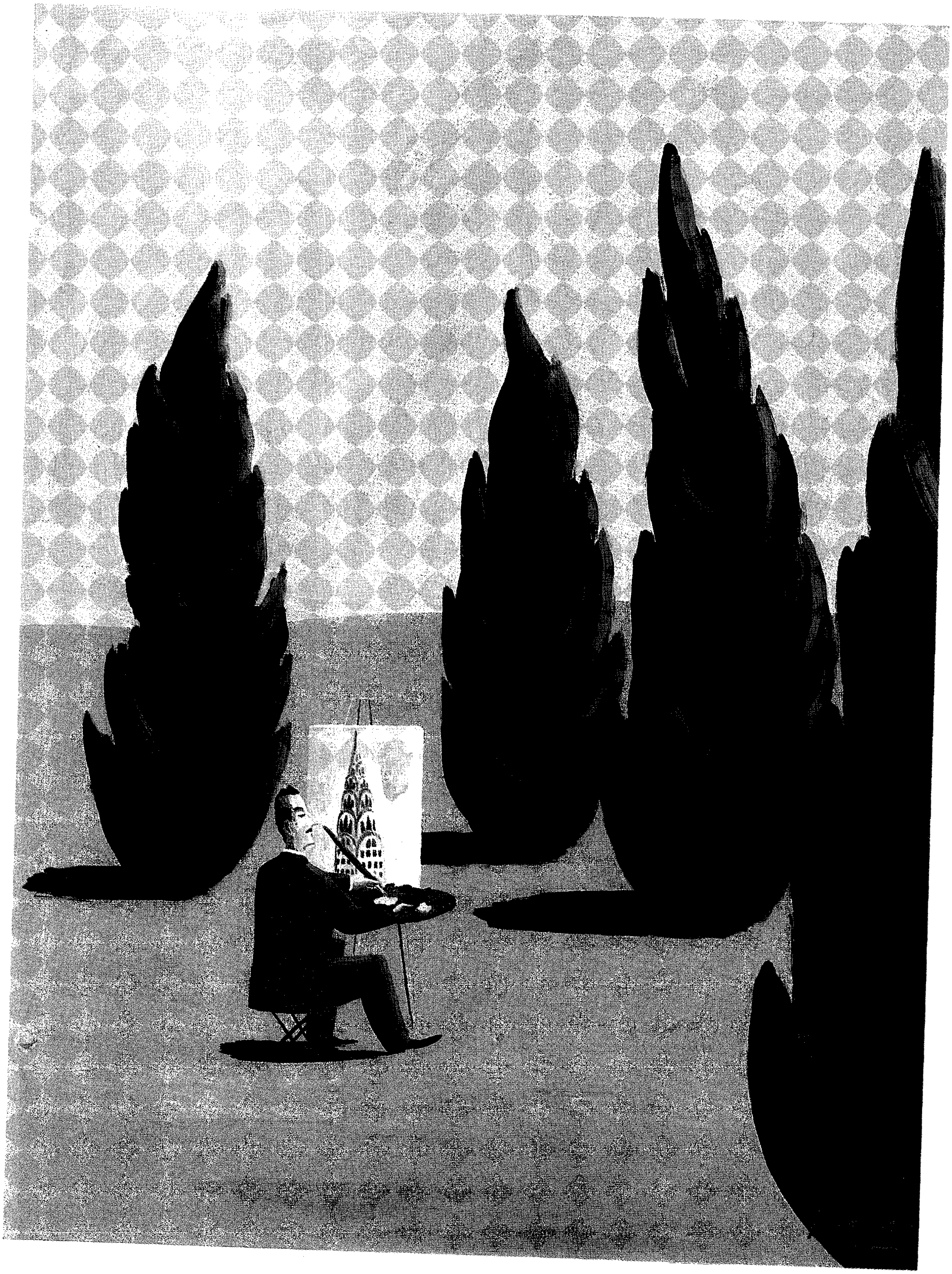
STALIN'S plans for the construction of the Palace of the Soviets are complicated by an uneasy and unfavorable course of events. For just when the General Secretary thinks he will be able to concentrate on the building of the palace, the remnants of a meek but nevertheless anti-Stalinist opposition are sighted. Even the slightest opposition is, under the conditions of that system, extremely perilous, and Stalin must occupy himself fully with this nightmare that chases the sleep from his eyes. Several months after the approval of the Iofan-Shchuko design, Stalin's potential rival Sergey Kirov is killed, at Stalin's instigation, and this death moves the General Secretary to undertake his first great massacre, which goes down in history under the gentler term "purge." Then there are the so-called great Moscow trials, in which Stalin disposes of his closest collaborators; then comes another massacre, in 1937; and then he occupies himself with the annexation of Poland, with the war in Finland, with the absorption of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and, finally, with the Second World War. Toward the end of the war, he must uproot and transplant the various nations that he suspects of treason (the Crimean Tatars, the Chechen, the Ingush, and so on); later he must oversee the deportation to Siberia and to Kazakhstan of large numbers of Poles, Lithuanians, Germans, Ukrainians; he must organize new trials and massacres, and by then he is old, has a stroke, and dies.

It is too much to expect that in the face of such an overwhelming press of duties he could calmly attend to the construction of the palace. And, because he rarely left the Kremlin during the last years, it is almost certain that he did not even look in on the future construction site to see what was happening.

Water accumulated in the deep excavation, and neighborhood boys tried to catch fish in it. Whether or not there were any fish there, I do not know. In time, a multitude of frogs propagated there. The water became covered with green duckweed. In the summer, the site was overgrown with a thick carpet of weeds—burdock, origan, nettles. Here and there clumps of bushes grew. The bushes gave shelter to local drunks and prostitutes. What was happening on the building site was increasingly visible from the street, because people were dismantling the fence, stealing the wood for fuel, until finally nothing concealed the sorry-looking garbage dump right near the Kremlin.

In the end, it was Khrushchev who ordered that an outdoor swimming pool be built there, utilizing the foundation of the Temple of Christ the Saviour—thus giving so much pleasure to those proud, hulking bathers who in temperatures of –20° strut along the edge of the pool, thrusting out their naked chests, disappearing at times in the clouds of white steam. ♦

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Klara Glowczewska.*)



I Miss the City

FICTION

THE RELIGIOUS WARS OF 1944

BY JULIA O'FAOLAIN

At dusk, Mr. Lacy, the keeper, eager for his tea, rang a bell to chase dawdlers home. They were hard to flush out, because the park was dotted with gazebos—"follies" built in the famine days to provide work—and if you hid in one you could always get out later by climbing the tall iron gates. There were places, too, where foot holes had been gouged in the perimeter wall.

"I'll have yez summonsed!" Mr. Lacy's peaked cap sliced through the dimness. Authority shone from his brass buttons. "I'll tell yeer mammies." There was a bylaw—but what was a bylaw?—forbidding anyone to linger in the locked, possibly perilous park.

Mysterious goings on had been reported. A girl from Teresa Dunne's school had fainted when a man did some momentous thing, appearing to her out of a bush. The *gardai* had come, but then the matter was hushed up and the girl cowed into discretion.

"I'll tell you what she saw," Mrs. Malahide offered Teresa. "If you like." They were in the Malahides' drawing room, and Teresa, whose mother had sent her over with a cake, was waiting to be given back the plate. You couldn't trust Mrs. Malahide to return it later. She was a bit scatty, a Protestant, and, according to some, "a gentlewoman, though no lady." She would say anything and was, intermittently and dangerously, Teresa's mother's friend.

"Well?"

Teresa was torn. She was reluctant to learn secrets from Mrs. Malahide, who would rob them of their versatile glee. Not knowing kept open a shiver of possibilities—but Mrs. Malahide was a belittler. She could shrink the wars of Troy. "Men fighting over a bitch" was how she once described those.

"Don't mind her," people advised. "She's that way because of her lip."

She had a harelip, without which she would have been a beauty—would have stayed in England and married her own sort rather than poor, decent Jack Malahide. Instead, here she was in an Irish village, cut off by the war and living, said gossips, on "the smell of an oil rag." Teresa herself had seen the gray, scummy broth of sheep's lung which Mrs. Malahide left on the stove for her children's meal when she and her husband took off for the pub. He, a parson's son, had served in the colonial service and now made simple toys that people bought because the Emergency had cut off supplies of better ones. Bright and two-dimensional, his hobbyhorses bounded up the village street between the legs of four- and five-year-olds whose sisters held skipping ropes by the snug beechwood handles he had painstakingly turned on his lathe. He had a marvelling smile and worshipped Mrs. Malahide.

"Poor Jack," sighed his cronies. Yet they liked her for her spirit and because, when not blasting the sour grapes of life, she was, said Teresa's mother, "great value." Mrs. Dunne, while deploring her friend's morals, hailed in her that fine contempt for convention which titillates the Irish.

"She's great company," Mrs. Dunne would acknowledge, "and hasn't a pick of human respect."

That was what worried Teresa. For how could she reconcile the ideals of her school nuns with tolerance of Mrs. Malahide, who must be the most brazen thing alive? Lipstick ran up the crack of her harelip, and contamination oozed from her. She had a mustache yellow from chain-smoking, and today—Sunday—her feet lazed in cinders that had spilled past the confines of her fenderless hearth. Drifts of turf ash had possibly settled in her hair, which was like the plumage of an old hen. Both hair and ash had orange streaks, like fossil memories of fire.

Scattered on the floor were the *Sunday Pictorial* and *News of the World*, banned English papers that had been smuggled past the customs inside copies of the *Catholic Herald*. Teresa read the headlines with an affronted eye. "SCOUTMASTER FOUND TROUSERLESS . . ." A fold concealed where. "DECEIVED MISTRESS CHOPS OFF LOVER'S . . ."

To quell the riot in her mind, Teresa told herself that perhaps no more had been chopped off than the lover's tie. But no: not in that paper, or Bunty Malahide wouldn't trouble to smuggle it in. Dirt was what she liked. Scandal. Her mind was beyond description.

"Impure," the nuns would have said, but the word fell short. Failing to anticipate Mrs. Malahide, they had sent Teresa forth into the world, unfit to cope—and were perhaps no fitter themselves. Tender rituals absorbed them, and most of last term had been spent planning the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, for which every girl had been required to buy a ten-shilling lily. Those whose families found this a strain might, the nuns conceded, substitute a chrysanthemum. But the concession was reluctant. Each donor was to say, "O Mary I give thee the lily of my heart! Be thou its guardian forever," and then present a bloom securely tipped with waterproof paper, lest sap stain her white uniform skirt. "You could hardly," said the nuns with a rueful smile, "say 'I give thee the chrysanthemum of my heart.' "

"It was Mike Lacy." Mrs. Malahide had grown impatient. "He exposed himself to her. I don't know why your mothers don't tell you the facts of life. Poor bugger's been sacked. I suppose his family will starve. Do you"—she drew greedily on a cigarette—"take my meaning? We're not talking about the exposition of the Sacrament!" On her lips the words sizzled into blasphemy.

Teresa gasped. Outrage released a babyish prickle of tears. Turning to hide this, she was once again assaulted by the headline "CHOPS OFF . . ." What? *That!* What else did they keep harping on Sunday after Sunday in the *News of the World*?

"Why will Mr. Lacy's family starve?" She made fast for the periphery of the story.

"You tell me!"

In exasperation, Mrs. Malahide drew

on her cigarette, then emptied her lungs: *pfff!* Smoke coiled, and her harelip was very visible. “It was his penis,” she told Teresa. “He showed it to her. Can you tell me why that would make a girl of her age—nearly your age—faint? How old are you now? Twelve? Thirteen? Haven’t you ever seen your father without his clothes? Or your brother? Well then? It’s a necessary part of nature, as you’ll soon discover. I blame those nuns for poisoning your minds. Sick sisters. Why hide things? Unless they’re being hypocritical, which I have no doubt they are!” And Bunty Malahide began to tell how Father Creedon—a man crippled with arthritis—was enjoying the sexual favors of all the nuns in the local convent. Like a cock in a barnyard or a victorious stag. Exciting herself, and possibly forgetting to whom she was talking, Mrs. Malahide worked up conviction. She always downed a glass or two of Tullamore Dew while reading the Sunday papers.

Teresa was fired by battle frenzy. The abuse of adult privilege infuriated her, and the maligning of the nuns called for punishment. “Bear witness to your religion,” she had been taught two years ago, in confirmation class, but the occasion had not arisen until now. Avenge, O Lord, those slaughtered saints whose bones . . . The spirit of old wars curdled her blood. She could feel it happen: clots blocking the flow as they did in anatomy charts. Evil was incarnate before her. Her eyes felt squinty, and the air glowed red.

The funny side would strike her later: for Mrs. Malahide’s flights of fancy would have been brought down to earth by a single look at Mother Dolours’ dowager’s hump, or at pale little Mother Crescentia, who flew into such passions about “men keeping women from the altar.” Quite suddenly, while putting a theorem on the blackboard, this meek nun would swing around, stab the air with chalk, and launch a polemic so ahead of its time that, years later, when the issue became a live one, few of the girls she had harangued would recall her yearning to be a priest. At first, the idea was too odd to shock, and by the time it did Mother Crescentia’s bones would be moldering in the very graveyard whose soil, if you believed Bunty Malahide, was white with those of strangled babies sired by Father Creedon.

“Why else,” Bunty wanted to know, “would nuns wear those bulky clothes? It’s to hide their pregnancies! Holy Mothers forsooth! You don’t think he goes there to hear confessions?”

“She needs a gag!” Teresa told her mother later. She would have cheerfully watched Mrs. Malahide burn at the stake. At the very least, the Englishwoman should be forced to eat her own unwholesome words. Instead, magnified by laughter, they mocked Teresa when she rushed off, feeling, she suspected, every bit as assaulted as the girl in the park must have done when confronted by Mr. Lacy. But she had not tried to argue. What would have been the point? Bunty Malahide loved a fight, and the one way to hush her would have been to agree with her. Teresa couldn’t. That would have been a betrayal of sweet-cheeked Mother Fidelia, who had made her pupils promise to profess their faith without false diffidence and arm themselves against ridicule. Mother F., an ardent and pretty nun, inflamed her pupils, and for a whole term Teresa had daydreamed about her, imagining shared heroics and intimacies so private that when the dentist pulled one of her teeth she went without gas lest she babble them out under its influence. For a while, even thinking of Mother F. made her skin tingle.

What could have possessed Mr. Lacy? Had he perhaps been taken short while having a pee?

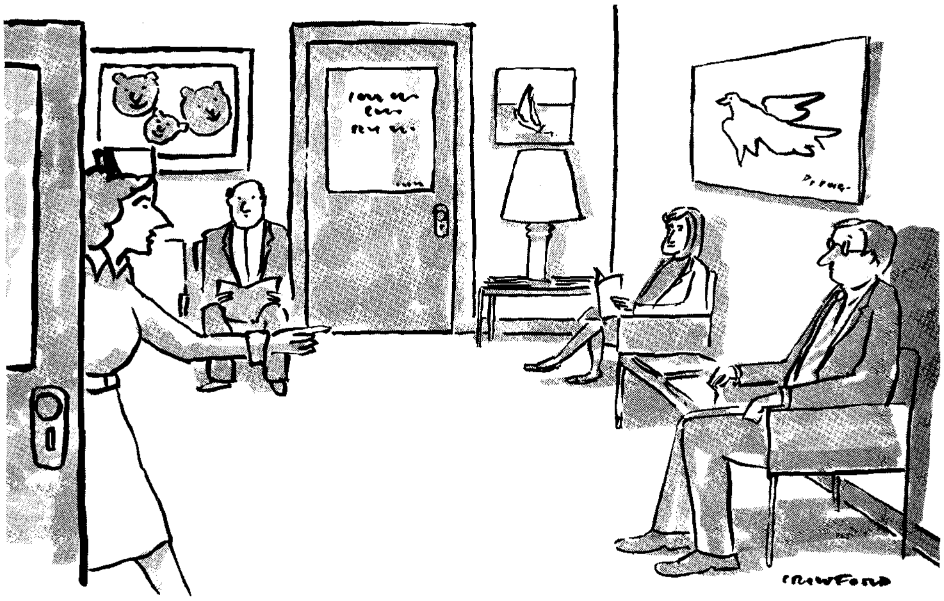
The story of his fall must be true, though, for he was now doing odd jobs in the Dunnes’ garden, where he looked old and bald without his peaked uniform cap. And maybe it was also true that his family was hungry, for one night, when Teresa looked out her window, she saw him by moonlight stealing cauliflowers and putting them into a sack. Poor Lacy! She remembered his old threat, “I’ll have yez summonsed,” and it struck her that she could do just that to him. Not that she would! The precariousness of self—he had lost some of his—was too upsetting. Earlier, she had seen him shelter from the rain under the empty sack, and his head had looked no bigger than a fist. Falling asleep, she dreamed that someone had exposed Mother Fidelia’s poor, cropped head. Nuns gave up their crowning glory when they took the veil.

HER mother had a row with Bunty Malahide over what she’d said to Teresa, and then made it up.

“How could you?” reproached Teresa.

But Mrs. Dunne said you had to make allowances. Bunty’s life had not gone well. That was why she lived here. The Irish were good-hearted, unlike her own sort, who despised her for marrying down. “She’s good-hearted herself,” argued Mrs. Dunne. “Look how kind she is to Greta.”

Greta was German and in need of kindness, now that Germany was losing



“Are you the one with the preëxisting condition or the one with just the existing condition?”

the war. The map pins with which Teresa's father marked Allied and Axis movements had reversed direction, and the march round and round the sofa, with which he and her brother Pat hailed the theme music before the BBC news, had acquired new swagger. "*Léro léro lillubuléro*," crowed Pat, lifting high his small fat knees. Sometimes he banged two spoons together. He was six. "*Lillubuléro bullenalà!*" The tune was Irish, and a lot of our men were fighting with the Allies, so, although we were neutral, and miffed by Mr. Churchill's threatening to seize our ports, we wanted his side to win. Pat planned to kill Hitler when he grew up.

You tried to hide such thoughts from Greta, though, and even Bunty, who hung out the Union Jack when Englishness welled up in her, refrained from trampling too brutally on Greta's sore feelings. With victory in sight, she managed—most of the time—to be forbearing.

"Well, she trampled on *mine!*" Teresa blushed. The word "feelings" reminded her of Mother F., and her anger at Bunty Malahide mingled with shame over a treason of her own. Queerly, at the height of her crush on the nun, she had felt impelled to write a mocking verse about her and to circulate it among her friends. The risk had excited her, as if she half hoped to be caught. The jingle began childishly, with the words "The dark witch of Loreto," and, as it went from desk to desk, someone changed "witch" to "bitch." That brought Teresa to her senses, and she snatched back her rhyme. She could be expelled. Girls *had* been for less—for trespassing in the nuns' part of the convent or spying on the pool where they took sea baths in long cotton dresses. Disrespect for the "brides of Christ" was a sacrilege, and she spent nervous days wondering if a copy of her jingle had escaped her.

The reality of her fear freed her. She now felt only pity for Mother Fidelia, stuck in her make-believe—which, it occurred to Teresa, was not unlike the games she and her classmates had played when they were small. Using penny-leaves for currency, they had sold field daisies for eggs and brown dockleaf blossoms for tea. Grass became string and rhubarb leaves wrapping paper. What difference was there between that and offering the Virgin the lily of your heart? The "brides of Christ" didn't even eat in public. If you gave one of them a sweet, she kept it for later. Everything was for later. They did nothing now, which was why it was so unfair of Mrs. Malahide to pretend they did.

"If I were you," said Teresa's mother, "I'd talk less about feelings! Remember how you hurt Greta's at Christmas?"

How forget? It had been the talk of the village, after a dirndl-skirted Greta, her queenly braids done up in a crown, had given a children's party. As if Christmas were something on which Germans had a special claim, she had invited all the local small children to celebrate it, and, in the end, most parents had decided to let them go. After all, the woman was not thought to be a Nazi, and she and her non-German husband were desperate to have babies but couldn't. Let her have ours for an afternoon, said the villagers magnanimously. Jack Malahide supplied a bran tub to be

SPRING FEVER

As though these fresh leaves were pressing
against your brain, the weather drenching
the roots of your hair. Among cloudy forms
a hand leans on a chair back,
the skin of it lit as if from inside. Surgery
is performed in the early morning, the station
noisy with headscarves, worry beads, prayers
for a safe, a speedy return. The procession
of yellows goes by and the hot grass lies still
where two gilded flies have stuck simmering
in sunshine: a frantic buzz of satisfaction
twists them, all wings and fire, away
from one another. The groundhog leaves
a sprig of rummaged green in your path
and a flicker digs for live things, sweet
lives alive and wriggling in the grass.
Every breath fills the air with wings—seeds
of maple ticking like crickets—and the hours
darken after one another, are small animals
falling off a cliff. You'd want to push
yourself over like that, to know
the plummeting descent, picking things
out as you fall: your cousins' farm,
the gray school behind the mortuary,
a wink of skylights, the white bell tower,
and those passing hands held out
as if raining grace. In a sudden saving
trick of light, the stacked chairs are
gravestones shining in the sun: all day
pacing behind glass you gaze out
at a going figure broken by sunlight,
at two women standing on the back steps,
pale as daylilies, arms folded, talking
into earnest faces. And from this height
you can see your own mother
cloaked with age and waving up at you
from a white mound of bones. The plane
lurches across the air, light drumming
the window, the season fleshing itself
again with sweetness and dread.

—Eamon Grennan

groped in for prizes, and Mrs. Dunne sent Teresa to help and to keep an eye on Pat, who was a bit of a handful.

He was also the child whom Greta knew best, so she asked him to start things off by inviting a little girl to dance: a mistake. Pat, when shy, sat on the ground. Plonk. Backside down. There was no budging him.

Greta didn't understand this. Hunkering down to coax him, she brought the fun to a standstill, and shushed the other children, who became bored. There was—people said afterward—a German stubbornness to this, and a barren woman's pedantry. She kept on and on at Pat, while the others fidgeted and pinched each other and a boy grabbed the Baby Jesus from the tasteful German crib. It was when someone pulled the plug on the fairy lights and several children began to cry that Teresa lost her head. "Pat," she cajoled, "ask Annie to dance. You'll never grow up and kill Hitler if you're afraid of a small girl."

At first, she didn't notice her gaffe, much less connect it with what happened next, which was that Greta gave a small scream, rushed to the telephone, and told the village operator that she wanted everyone to leave. Yes. Now. At once! Parents were to fetch their children. The party was over. "Take them away! I know now what you tell them behind my back! Oh you Irish are false! Tell the parents. Their children steal Baby Jesus and wish to kill Hitler. You hate me secretly."

Helplessly, Teresa tried to restore order while Greta sobbed, Pat still sat on the floor, and the more enterprising small boys pocketed the marzipan crib animals, which had been cooked with sugar rations contributed by their mothers. Then someone put "Heilige Nacht" on the gramophone. It was Jack Malahide, who had borrowed the rector's car—those who had petrol during the big Emergency were expected to help with minor ones—and was now piling children into it to deliver them home. Meanwhile, his wife calmed Greta down and comforted her with whiskey.

It was only when Teresa heard Bunty say to Greta that Teresa hadn't *meant* to upset her that she knew she had. Greta, her flaxen plaits askew, was weeping over the ruins of her crib. Where, she wanted to know, was Baby Jesus? And the marzipan donkey? She looked like a wronged maiden in a tale by the Brothers Grimm.

PEACE was made. But Greta was not the same. Like poor Lacy, she had lost her plumpness and her trust.

It wasn't all Teresa's fault. The Church of Ireland—Protestant, despite the name—let Greta down, depriving her of spiritual comfort, since she, who was also a Protestant, had nowhere else to go. But how attend its services? Its small, embattled, but adamant congregation prayed hard against Germany, called God to its colors, and sang in unwavering chorus, "Thou who made us mighty, make us mightier yet." Since "us" meant Britain, this annoyed the native Irish as much as it did Greta. Patriots marvelled at the old oppressor calling itself "Mother of the Free," and from time to time on a Friday night broke into the church to pee ritually on its floor.

Friday was payday, when even poor Lacy, defying the confines of his life, was to be heard smashing his own possessions, driving his wife to despair, and chanting in the spirited abandon of drink, "Twas there that you whispered tenderly that you loved me, would always be Lily of the lamplight, my ow-w-w-wn Lily Marlene."

This cut Greta to the quick. "Even our songs they steal!" she wailed to her false friends, Mrs. Malahide and Mrs. Dunne, who consoled her with soft words and hard liquor.

JANUARY was snowy, and Colonel Williams' pond froze, which gave people a rare chance to bring out their skates. The Colonel offered to supply a barbecue. No invitations were sent, since all were understood to be welcome—all, that is to say, except Greta. Williams, an ex-British officer, would not fraternize with the enemy.

"Will she have the nous to stay away?" worried Mrs. Dunne. "I've dropped hints, but Greta's not one to take them." Mrs. Dunne sighed. Neutrality was tricky.

Teresa had her own troubles. She had, after some hesitation, suspended her feud with Mrs. Malahide so as to borrow her toboggan. It was the only one in the village. Everyone else used old sheets of corrugated iron.

The Malahide attic was a trove of odd tackle: snowshoes, pith helmets, motoring veils, and other aids for facing intemperate conditions. These, like the scaly tail that is kept hidden in the story of the mermaid who marries a fisherman, testified to their owners' alien nature. The Malahides had lived in places whose foreignness clung to them. Jack Malahide, for instance, had a parasite in his blood which, according to local gossip, could only be caught on the rare occasions when it emerged to walk across his eyeball.

While rummaging up there for skates for her mother, Teresa had a shock.

"I found a poem of yours," said Bunty Malahide, coming up behind her so suddenly that Teresa nearly let a trunk lid fall on her own neck. "It slipped from your pocket. About a nun. It's quite funny," she congratulated. "I must say, you're a dark horse!" And she proceeded, teasingly, to recite it. "I added a verse."

This was, of course, crude. All about nuns with buns in the oven. Father Creedon's name figured in it, *and* Mother F.'s! Teresa felt sick—the more so because of something that had recently happened in school. "I'm disappointed in you!" the nun had told her hurtfully. "You've let me down. You're as silly and light-minded as the rest."

What had sparked the thing off was a discussion of the seniors' Christmas play. This was about a pagan who got converted on his wedding day, then found himself in a moral dilemma when fellow-Christians wanted him to be a martyr while his bride claimed that he owed himself to her. It was resolved—predictably, if you knew convent plays—by the bride's own conversion. The thing was in hexameters. Deadly in more ways than one. A kind of trap, Teresa sensed, for girls like herself, who the nuns hoped might have a vocation. To elude this, she asked Mother Fidelia whether the converted bridegroom wasn't a bit prone to spiritual pride? What about his telling his Christian mentor, who deplored his reluctance to get himself killed, that the mentor didn't know what it was like to have a wife? This, as Teresa remarked reasonably, was only a day after his wedding. How much could he know about having a wife himself? After one night?

Mother F. blushed. Unprecedentedly. And the class dissolved in glee. Teresa, though usually quicker than the rest, was the last to see why. Sex, to be sure! The topic had, she saw with shock, invaded not only the sanctuary of school but the mind of Mother Fidelia. Indignantly, Teresa, too, blushed, and when accused by the nun of letting her down, felt that the shoe was on the other foot. Like it or not, the lily of her heart was festering and likely, as Shakespeare warned, to smell far worse than weeds!

And now here was Bunty M., source of slime and vulgarity, gleefully reciting Teresa's embarrassing jingle. Why had she ever written it? To check her own feelings for Mother F.? But there was no time to ponder this. Imagine if Bunty—you couldn't put anything past her!—were to show it to other people?

"Give it back to me," begged Teresa. But Bunty said the poem was now half hers, and she wanted to copy it out.

"I'll give it to you at the pond, this afternoon," she promised.

Teresa didn't dare argue.

COLONEL WILLIAMS did things in style. Two small boys with brooms were keeping the ice clear of slush, and Mike Lacy had been set to mind the barbecue. Carefully pricked wartime sausages, made mostly of bread crumbs and lard, squirted sizzles of grease into the charcoal. Anglo-Irish ladies sailed by on skates bought on foreign holidays before the war. This, noted Mrs. Dunne, had been one of the villages of the Pale. Even the Lacys were of English stock, having come over, generations back, to serve in a mansion that had now disappeared. Colonel Williams lived in its dower house, which would no doubt be torn down one day, too. His sort and their habitats were doomed.

"The big-house people had their good side." Mrs. Dunne surveyed the pretty scene. "Liked to make a show. 'Showing the flag,' they called it. But at home"—she lowered her voice—"they'd live on the smell of a sausage. We had a maid who'd worked for them, and she was as thin as a lath. They starved her and themselves. Half an egg they'd give her for Sunday breakfast! Imagine."

She spoke briskly while fastening her borrowed skates. Greta, Mrs. Dunne was relieved to see, hadn't come. Neither had Bunty Malahide, for whom Teresa was anxiously looking out, refusing to be distracted until Colonel Williams begged her to help with the sausages. There was hot wine as well, which was to be kept from the younger fry. Teresa surreptitiously drank the better part of a glass before deciding she didn't like it.

Her mother skated toward her, showing signs of agitation. "Greta's just come and gone," she whispered. "The Colonel cut her dead. I tried to talk to her, but she rushed off in a state. There was something bad, too—for Germany—on the one-o'clock news. Somebody should be with her. Help me off with my skates. No. Better go ask Father Creedon to look after her. I saw him coming up the field. Quick! Take the toboggan and head him off. Ask him to hold the fort until I come."

So off whizzed Teresa to intercept the priest and, having sent him on his errand of mercy, trudged back up the slope to the barbecue, where the Colonel was discussing the incident with Bunty Malahide. What could one do, he shrugged, but set an example? War was war, and it was a damn shame the Irish hadn't joined this one. They were natural fighters. A crying shame! Still, better not to spoil today's merriment. He lowered his voice, and Teresa heard no more. He was a straight-backed man who, when walking around his property, carried a long, swooping, metal-tipped tool for rooting up weeds. You had, he told Bunty, to take a stand. Stick to your guns, what? Bunty kept nodding her head.

"Yes," she sighed. "Yes."

Teresa, who was keeping an eye on her, saw with surprise that Bunty's sardonic look was gone. She and the Colonel stood in a small bubble of intimacy. Of course, they were two of a kind, and maybe lonely. Maybe they found us as alien as we did them? The thought was unwelcome. She had to admit, though, that Bunty looked pinker and younger than usual. Her eyes sparkled, and Teresa remembered people saying that Bunty would have been a beauty, but for her lip. For a moment she even had a look of Mother Fidelia.

Behind Bunty, Mrs. Dunne now moved into Teresa's field of vision as she cut across the field, slipping in the soft snow. She was trying to catch up with Father Creedon and Greta, who had taken the path.

"Can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds!" said Colonel Williams, who was obviously upset.

"Just look at that!" Bunty waved toward the dip in the field where Father Creedon was trying to hold up the stumbling Greta. His black suit glowed against the snow and, as they watched, she lurched, and he caught her in his arms.

Bunty shaded her eyes with her hand. "He's getting a feel in! Well, good for Greta. Better her than the nuns! She'd *like* a bun in her oven! A gift from Holy Ireland to take home to Germany when the war ends! That reminds me, I've got your poem here," she called to Teresa. "I've added another bit. Do you want to hear?"

"No!"

"It's quite racy! Listen . . ."

But she got no further, for Teresa—or was it Mike Lacy, who had been at the wine?—now shook the barbecue, so that the sausages fell onto the coals and the sudden fatty blaze had to be dealt with by the Colonel. When things were restored, Teresa dusted off the salvageable sausages and threaded them on a spit while Mike laid out a ring of fresh ones.

The way he was standing, they looked like penises sprouting at belly level from his old black suit. Or the spokes of a monstrance. Exposition, thought Teresa, and was shocked at the effect Bunty Malahide had on her thoughts. Might this be irreversible? A lasting contamination? And could it have leaked from her mind to Mother Fidelia's? Removing a split sausage from her spit, she saw that a piece of smoldering coal had got stuck inside it. Giddily, she became aware of Bunty's voice rabbiting on and, mingling with it in her head, like wireless interference, a line from a prayer: "Cleanse my lips, O Lord, with a live coal."

"Here. Have a sausage." She pinched the fatty meat tight over the coal, handed it to Bunty, and watched with a thrill of horror as the harelip closed jauntily on the burning mouthful. ♦

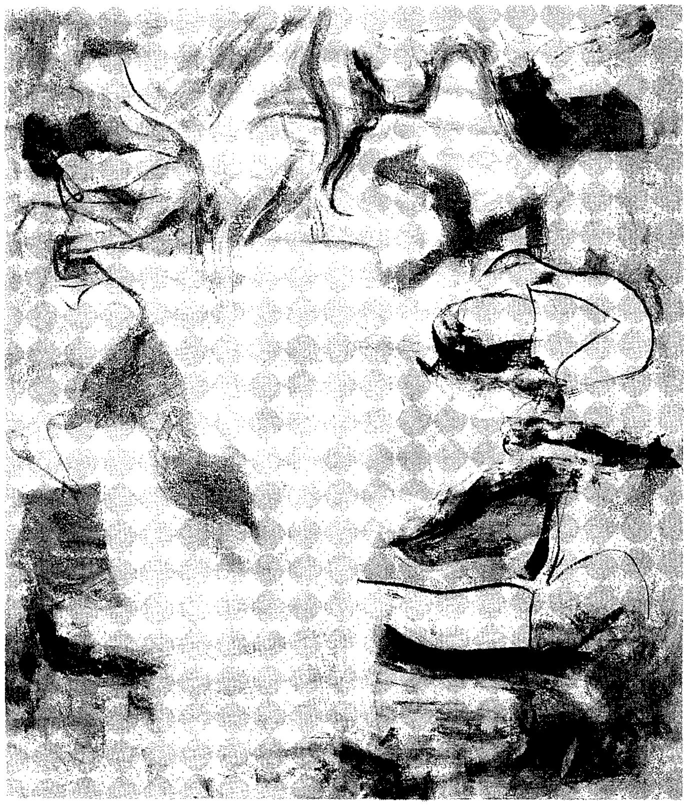
THE CRITICS

THE ART WORLD

THE LAST ACTION HERO

BY ADAM GOPNIK

MODERN painting is no country for old men. The National Gallery's East Building, where a big retrospective exhibition of the paintings of Willem de Kooning opened last week, is a kind of sad garage of wrong turns taken in old age. The East Building's permanent installation of large-scale work by aging artists, commissioned for the building's opening, in 1978, is, with its assembly-line abstractions and immobile mobiles, a reminder of how hard it is for even the most gifted artists to keep a poetic style from becoming fossilized. But de Kooning breaks the mold: his three exhibitions of painting that Xavier Fourcade put on in New York in the mid-eighties, when the painter was in his late seventies, remain the most radiant shows in New York memory—radiant the way the songs in "The Tempest" are radiant, with the wisdom of a lifetime replayed as nursery rhymes or chants. Big, candy-colored pictures, all blue twists and pink heat, with de Kooning's characteristic vocabulary of body-part shapes reduced to a few arabesques and ribbons laid out against a milky white background, they had both an eighteenth-century serenity and a high-modern spareness. Those late paintings, moreover, seemed to clinch de Kooning's place as the Rubens of regression: the only painter of his generation who, accepting resolutely the principles of an art that turned back, almost perversely, toward pure gesture and libidinal color, still seemed magically to have constructed a life in art which had an Old Master logic to it—a rowdy beginning, an expansive maturation, a confused middle age, and a final period in which all the themes were played back as fairy tales instead of tragedies.



De Kooning's 1981 "Pirate (Untitled II)."

This happy picture got complicated, though, by the admission, in 1989, that de Kooning had during this late period been succumbing to senility. For a while, before he laid down his brush for good, in 1990, his lawyers had to put forward the notion that, though he could no longer think straight, he was painting as well as ever. It was not an insupportable notion, but it was sad. In plain English, it seemed to imply that one good way to renew your style was to lose your reason, and, though this idea was not entirely without a kind of rationale of its own within the history of modern art—a second childhood was just where a lot of painters, from Matisse on, had wanted to end up—it seemed, depressingly, once again to return modern painting to a romance of extremes. (And there were hints, too, of a pathos touching the edge of fraud: an old man, lost in befuddlement, still making his marks and seeing them borne away to the market.)

It is this "dichotomy," to use the weaselly art-world term, that underlies what would otherwise be the slightly "problematic" show at the National Gallery, which will come to the Met this fall. There are really only two reasons to have a retrospective exhibition: one, so that the artist can show what he thinks his work has been about; the other, so that someone else can show why the artist was wrong. The de Kooning show cannot be either. The artist is too ill to offer, or even supervise, an account of his work, yet his living presence makes it difficult for anyone else to offer a forceful or determining account of it. How you are going to put the late work together with the early work is the big de Kooning question, and this show doesn't even attempt to answer it. There is a "representative" handful of pictures from each period, and the feeling that results is of wares displayed rather than choices made. The occasion is ceremonial—de Kooning was named "Person of the Week" on ABC News in the first week of May, and a de Kooning was recently placed in the White House collection, the first abstract picture to hang there—rather than illuminating. To take a slightly cold-blooded view, it might have been better to delay this show until the artist died in the flesh, as he seems to have passed on in spirit—to wait for a time when secrets can be told and order given and sense made. Instead, we have a not-quite-official not-quite-retrospective with a gravely circuitous catalogue.

The catalogue, in fact, demonstrates the problems of the show: there are too many cooks, all tipping their toques to one another. The catalogue includes three essays, no one of which seems to have much to do with the others. The British art historian David Sylvester, who should have been encouraged to write a full-out life and times of de Kooning, contributes instead an oddly truncated circling around some of the painter's themes. Sylvester is terrific at making the obvious point that becomes obvious only after he has made it; for instance, that de Kooning's portraits of women are composed exactly like Picasso's of his dealers (and share cupidity as a subject). But Sylvester ends abruptly, and then Richard Shiff is ushered onstage, with an essay in which some interesting news about de Kooning's technique is interlarded with breathless, humorless academic paraphrases of innocent de Kooning remarks. (De Kooning, though very smart, cultivated throughout his life an unpretentious American Zen manner. He figured out early on that in America it does not pay for an artist to be too bright about his own work. Play the primitive and they "interpret." Seem argumentative and all they want to do is argue back.) After that, the curator Marla Prather appears with a chronology of de Kooning's career, which should have been integrated with Sylvester's and Shiff's essays. None of this adds up. If the Clintons are trying to figure out what is so hot about their new picture, they will not figure it out from this catalogue.

That's a shame, because de Kooning is an easy painter to get. Translating his straightforward, purposefully corny remarks into abstract metaphysical propositions misses the whole sequence and point of his work, which was to take the ponderous abstractions of metaphysical art theory and turn them into something as tangible as a cheerleader or an expressway. De Kooning's art is a record of physical existence, of life felt from the inside out, rather than a set of propositions about anything. *Seeing* it is getting it.

What makes de Kooning special is that he is the only painter of his generation who thought in three dimensions and was also an original colorist; he is the only abstract painter who can really draw. (Mondrian could draw, but he gave it up; the renunciation was part of the achievement. Pollock and Rothko mostly found a way around drawing.) To a kind of deranged paraphrase of academic modelling de Kooning added a wild and unconstrained palette: he could finger-paint his way out of every corner that his shape-making backed him into.

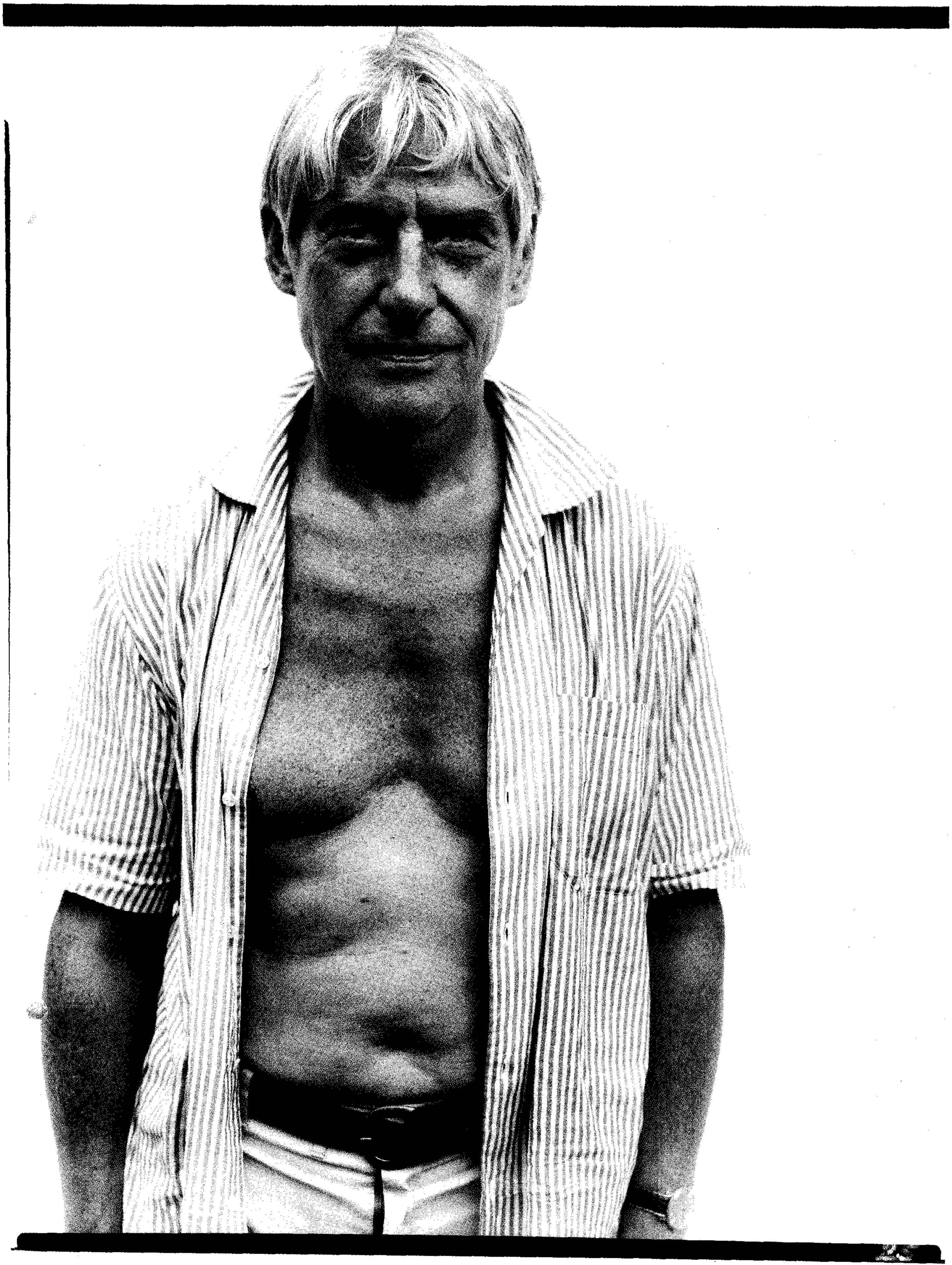
DE KOONING was born in Rotterdam, Holland, in 1904. He got a second-rate academic training at the local art school—a second-rate education was more useful than a first-rate one, as things turned out, since it gave him the technique without the philosophy—and came to America in 1926. Too much, perhaps, can be made of de Kooning's foreignness; he was always closer to Picasso than to van Gogh, and Rembrandt exists in his work only as an invocation. But if the spiritual extremes of Dutch painting aren't visible in his work, its materialism is. A certain Dutch fatness found its way inside: a love of *low landscapes impregnated with mois*ture; a slightly crude, beery joie de vivre, expressed in too pink flesh and too ruddy cheeks; and a slash-and-dash attack that owes more to the Dutch beer-hall tradition than to Rembrandt.

De Kooning came to America with a headful of Arrow-shirt ads: he wanted to make a lot of money as a magazine illustrator. Instead, he found himself *stuck in the commercial-art sweatshops* of Manhattan. He was a happy immigrant, though. He liked the free and easy side of American life, the chance to move back and forth between galleries and commercial art. In the depths of the Depression, he actually worked for a while as a housepainter, and it would not be completely wrong to see his paintings as a combination of "art" and mere brushing: he was a cross between Frans Hals and Tom Sawyer.

He slipped sidewise into avant-garde painting. His first works were more or less unremarkable portraits of friends and of his wife, Elaine, done in a style derived from Picasso. But then he met another immigrant, Arshile Gorky, whom he seems to have admired as much for the kind of monastic order Gorky brought to his life as for the qualities of his work. Gorky was a depressed, resolute painter, who employed a livid but limited vocabulary of Picassoesque shapes, and he inducted de Kooning into the notion that the real path of painting lay in a Surrealism that would go beyond Surrealism—a Surrealism that would express itself abstractly.

De Kooning adopted that approach, but behind his hand there was a healthy, vivid, unself-conscious directness. He sensed at once what was weak in Gorky's painting and in that of all Gorky's contemporaries: their abstraction was long on theory and ambition, and short on shapes. Even the best abstract painting in the mid-forties, when de Kooning gave up representation, used a stereotyped vocabulary of blots and biomorphs; it knew what it wanted to say but didn't have a vocabulary to say it with. De Kooning realized that the answer lay in the same idealized forms that his peers were giving up. He saw that academic form was intrinsically Surreal: classical modelling, after all, depended on a system of smooth transitions and abstract jigsaw-puzzle shapes, which replaced all the visual static of real *bodies in real light—the fussy stops and* starts and knots and simple bumpiness. Those shapes had been imprinted on de Kooning's nervous system early on, and they became the basis of his abstract style. (Miró had made a similar discovery, by more conceptual means, in the thirties, when he used the system of graphic highlights that he found in cheap mechanical reproduction as the templates of his own biomorphic forms.)

This refashioning of academic draw-



Willem de Kooning, photographed by Richard Avedon in Springs, New York, August 18, 1969.

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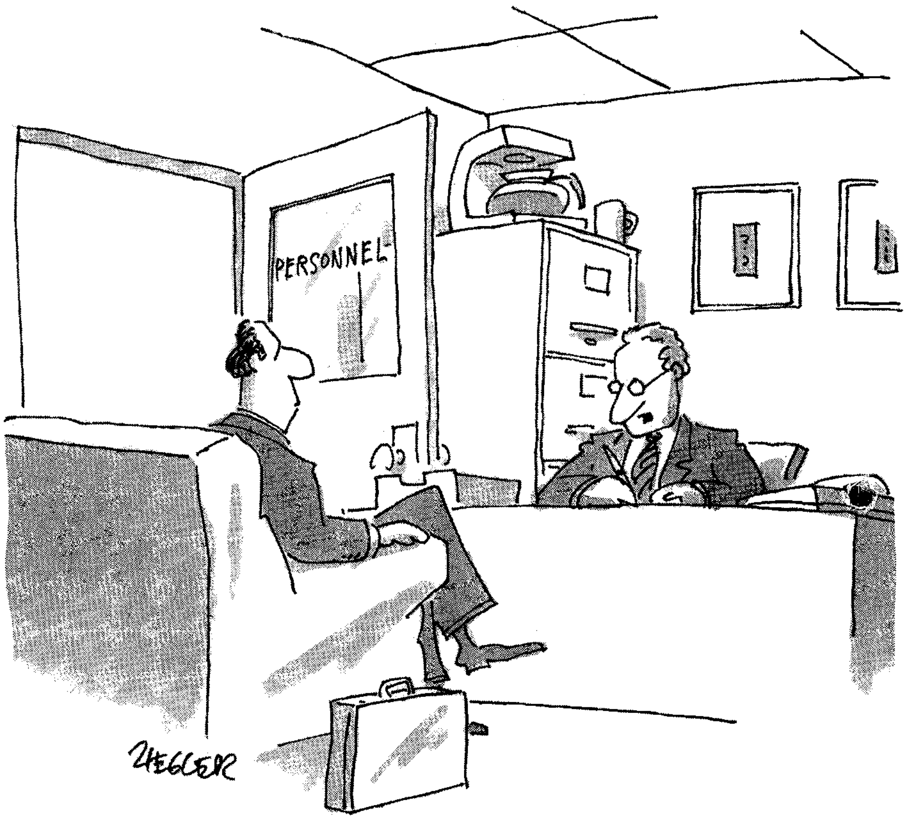
VILLE ET VILLAGE

ing into pure form happened naturally for de Kooning. Gorky's faith in automatic processes had encouraged him to make shapes without looking, and eventually he even started drawing with his eyes shut. Monet, as Cézanne famously remarked, was an eye. De Kooning is a *hand*. He is not, in his breakthrough pictures of the late forties, really a pure painter, in the sense that, say, Franz Kline was. Everything in de Kooning creates a shape, instead of producing a gesture. The typical handwriting of his black-and-white paintings of the forties—the double S-curves and ogival arches, the ribbons turning in on themselves like sea lions, and the forms rising to a curving peak, like Venetian palazzo windows—is an outline or a paraphrase, a remnant of the old classical system of modelling. These pictures are loony reductions of academic drawing, the hooks and curves of Rubens women reduced to essentialized, stenographic form. But this gives the painting a muscular, academic solidity. To look at a forties de Kooning is to see how scrawny and undernourished the vocabulary of abstract painting was before him. Mondrian gave abstract painting its soul. De Kooning gave it a body.

If he had done no more than this, his art might have settled into a kind of large-scale Art Nouveau decoration. And, in fact, certain de Kooning outline drawings from the late forties have the character of pure design—almost like Gothic tracery. But there was something perverse and contrary in his character, too, which responded to the contrariness of "bohemian" lower-New York life, the now vanished world of Fourth Avenue taverns and bookstores. By 1950, instead of gracefully unleashing his breasts and arms and throats onto the canvas in looping lines and continuous line, he began to articulate these academic fragments as a child might—smearing and scratching the lines onto the surface. Nothing flows easily; it's all crabbed and leaping, and deliberately crude. His great pictures of 1949 and 1950—"Attic" and "Excavation"—are, for all their academic inspiration, the first *funky* pictures ever made. They have a schmutzy, dirty, spouting-storm-sewer quality, which remains in tension with the essentially baroque feeling for form.

"Attic" and "Excavation" are New York the way that Analytical Cubism is Paris. De Kooning's New York pictures are sometimes compared to, or illuminated by quotations from, the work of the New York School poets Frank



"And, finally, are you now or have you ever been disgruntled?"

O'Hara and Edwin Denby. It's an enlightening comparison, precisely because it shows what de Kooning got out of the classical tradition. The New York poets never really found a cohesive form into which they could plug all the bits and pieces of urban life—the absence of such a form was part of what their work was about. They were trying to stitch fragments into a full-bodied tradition. De Kooning, on the other hand, already had a tradition—it stretched from Hals to Picasso—and he was able to break it apart. He excavated to the bedrock of Western drawing.

The New York pictures of 1948 and 1949 will for some of us probably always be the high point of de Kooning's work. The National Gallery includes a terrific room of black-and-white de Koonings—like Art Nouveau done over in asphalt and concrete. But his reputation's ascent into permanent orbit really started the following year, when he began "Woman One," the first of his sequence of "Women." The "Women"—all of them half Thurber wife, half Neolithic goddess—are by now such icons of the period, and of de Kooning's genius, that to criticize them seems a little cranky. They are, by the conventional account, important because they returned abstraction to its proper base in the figure. But the "Women" are really much less fleshy than the abstractions of the two previous years—they have much less plastic intensity, less sense of tactile form grasped and then released, and seem more like big graffiti scrawls. They're more obviously figural than the abstractions, but they are less *corporeal*—more bust and less body.

De Kooning's "Women" are the kind of picture that art critics and historians will always love, though, because they include clearly literary images and can be constantly seen in terms of an "issue." Are de Kooning's women great gals, prisoners, the victims of a Male European imagination, or people in their own right, whose sexuality and aggression are an antidote to the conventional decorousness of the artist's model? The literature on this issue is large, and continues to grow—though it seems to me that to ask such questions is a bit like asking where Saul Steinberg's cats stand on the issue of animal experimentation. The "Women" are women only in the most abstract and sketchy sense. They are not nymphs or familiars or muses; they are *scarecrows*—meant to frighten off the crows of mere decorativeness that by the early fifties were already beginning to devour most of the Abstract Expressionists. The joke—and these paintings are meant to be a kind of joke—lies in their graffiti-like assault on good taste, and no set of pieties will ever quite include them. Abstraction typically begins in pattern and always threatens to go right back. The "Women" were fertility figures, invoked to keep the pictures growing.

And they did—for a while, anyway. But the trouble with invoking demons is that you also have to go on evoking them, and by the mid-fifties de Kooning's painting had become as stereotyped as anyone else's. In 1963, he moved out to Springs, near East Hampton, and his painting veered between pink ladies and gleaming seascapes. I don't like mid-period de Kooning, and I can never decide which are the worst: the "spontaneous" improvisations, the overheated, all-out babes, or the East End landscapes, which are like gull-and-wave painting done in mayonnaise. De Kooning did not really have an "eye"—the kind of hypersensitive responsiveness to the nuances of light and land that can preoccupy a less gifted painter—and his readiness to believe that spontaneity is enough (a belief that his admirers, of course, encouraged) meant that he could just go on making the same old marks. Nobody cared. By that time, he had become a myth, whose brushstrokes were loaded with a weight of meaning that no one's could sustain. For Harold Rosenberg he had become the existential hero par excellence, the Action painter whose touch was meaningful precisely because it did not point in any direction. Each unmediated movement, each stroke, admirers insisted, was a pot of paint flung into the face of Big Brother. He had become, along with Francis Bacon, one of the last two expressionist heroes—a kind of shaman figure, whose struggles with his canvases create a theatre of existential drama.

The trouble was that de Kooning was completely miscast. He had nothing in particular to express. A direct, robust animal sensuality was the alpha and omega of his sensibility. Bacon had a genuinely miserable sense of isolation and social confusion—a view of the world which he was (occasionally) able

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to make into painting. De Kooning's view of the world stopped at his own body's edge; for about twenty years his work retreated into a kind of self-parody. When he said that he liked pictures that were corny or funny, he was not being deep. He meant it. Rosenberg went on citing Melville, and de Kooning went on making the same pictures, and, though it pleased them both, not much ground was covered. (The entire pas de deux resembles that between Ruskin and Turner; in both cases, the critic invested an essentially anti-cerebral and sensual art with a moral weight that it was not designed to carry, and that must have made the artist as uneasy as he was flattered.)

Then, around 1980, de Kooning's late pictures began to appear. The current show has only ten, but every one is a treasure. They are, for all the pink, chubby ladies that preceded them, the sexiest pictures that de Kooning had painted in years. (I have always been puzzled when art historians say that the "Women" are "erotic." It makes you wonder what turns these people on.) The late pictures, tightly drawn with a fine brush, are erotic in an allusive, Matissean way. The rhythm and the drawing are uncannily like those in the mural version of "Dance." If you begin to copy them, you find all the typical forms of life drawing—arabesques and flowing French curves, long waists and hips—under your pencil.

The National Gallery show, unfortunately, includes only three paintings from what turns out to be the miraculous year of 1981. So a complete late de Kooning show remains to be done. But, fortunately, among those three is "Pirate" (which, also fortunately, is owned, though not regularly shown, by the Museum of Modern Art). In this painting, for every moment that threatens to become coy or obvious in the wrong way—when the little eels of paint in the upper right, for instance, begin to wriggle, like chorines—another, answering moment, like the worn, illegible void in the lower left, returns the picture to difficulty. De Kooning benefitted by losing his worry about appearing spontaneous. "Pirate" is full of stops and starts and scrapes and second thoughts. Instead of feeling anxious, though, it feels retrospective, like an old man telling how things happened; the pauses for breath are part of the effect. It is a picture about absorption, and absorption is the last happiness.

Looking at these pictures, one has an urge to vindicate de Kooning from the charge of being an "intuitive," a force of nature, and to emphasize instead the discipline and complexity of his best, and last, work. But this is really another kind of sentimentality. In fact, all that discipline was part of his effort to become an intuitive force of nature. That he got there at the end, after the cooler and rational part of the mind was gone, is not really shocking, or even as sad as it had seemed. To look for sensation where in the past you found meaning and to look for meaning where once you found only pure sensation was the point and purpose of his work.

In a curious way, this may be why de Kooning's legacy seems richer now for realist painting than for abstraction. Abstraction can only genuflect to de Kooning; it can't build on him. Yet for painters like Chuck Close and Wayne Thiebaud, to name just two, de Kooning remains the vital, irreplaceable begetter and teacher. De Kooning's tempo—his ability to do away with underdrawing, with drawing as a separate activity, so that form-making and paint-swinging are a single act—remains a model for a reanimated realism. Close's ability to pulse a seemingly photographic face right across the surface, instead of inscribing it by pieces, and Thiebaud's ability to get a realized shape out of a mere swipe both come right from de Kooning.

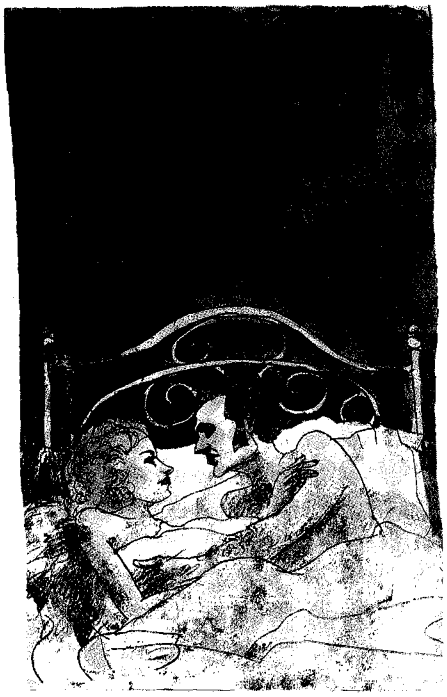
The very last de Koonings, hardly more than a few bright hooks on scraped canvas, oddly recall the image of Balanchine on his deathbed, still creating steps with his fingers on the bedsheet. For all the difference in temperament, the scale and the peculiar nature of de Kooning's career do recall Balanchine's, in the sense that both men remade European classical culture in the image of American physicality. Even the best abstract art before de Kooning—Mondrian and Kandinsky—has about it the air of tea shops, of Theosophical aspirations and dim visionary raptures. The achievement of de Kooning's abstract painting was to remove the metaphysics from abstract art and give it vitality—to make abstraction back into painting. He made abstraction as ordinary as a trip up Fourth Avenue—as natural as breathing, as real as life. ♦

THE THEATRE

LOVE IN GLOOM

BY JOHN LAHR

THERE are animals in the jungle that survive by playing dead, and Fosca, the heroine of Stephen Sondheim's "Passion," is one of them. Ugly, hysterical, unrelenting, joyless, she's an amalgam of alienations, and personifies both romantic agony and the dead end to which Sondheim, in his perverse brilliance, has brought the American musical. In "Passion," the charm of angst replaces the charm of action, and the American musical, once a noisy, vulgar, bumptious exhibition of our appetite for life, is deconstructed into an elegant flirtation with death. Sondheim's "revolution" is not really one of form (most of his shows are lyric-heavy and not well integrated) but one of intellectual ambition: his shows substitute the prestige of pain for the prestige of enjoyment. Here, for instance, the audience is encouraged not to applaud but to listen. The songs are treated as narrative, and are not even listed in the program. Sondheim, whose musical ideas are rarely as bold as his lyric ones, is in rebellion against "tunes" (which is why he doesn't provide many) and the notion of himself as a "tunesmith." We are coaxed to see Sondheim as a thinker and the musical as a statement. But the formal qualities of verse—rhyme's combination of rigor and delight—make it a blunt analytic instrument, "unsuitable for controversy," as W. H. Auden has pointed out. Nevertheless, the public, ever mindful of Sondheim's greatness ("Is Stephen Sondheim God?" a *New York* headline asked recently), sits reverently, without intermission, to receive the pieties and the pontificating of "Passion," which, typically, has no passion, only ratiocination. What we get in this listless epistolary musical, where the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other, is the results of Sondheim's recent experiments with the play's director and librettist, James Lapine: not the big heart but the dead heart; not the joy of the pleasure dome but the hush of the lecture hall; not dancing but reading.



Words of love: Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie in "Passion."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Sondheim's eye for excellent material far exceeds his ability to plumb it. "Assassins" (1991), for instance, offered him the extraordinary panorama of American psychopathy and infamy, but from it he drew merely a dark cartoon. "Passion," which is set in Italy in the eighteen-sixties and was adapted from the Ettore Scola film "Passione d'Amore," poses a mesmerizing psychological conundrum in the story of Fosca's erratic behavior and her eventual seduction of the handsome, promising captain, Giorgio (superbly sung by Jere Shea), but Sondheim can't musically come to grips with its issues of love and emotional tyranny. The production prefers to stay on the surface of the Romantic formula of suffering without reward. The startling first image—the naked body of Giorgio's lover, Clara (the voluptuous and fine-voiced Marin Mazzie), astride her hairy-chested package of military testosterone—has the look of passion but not the

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hunger. They are talking their pleasure, not taking it, and this mutual meditation on ecstasy is cut short at the end of the first song by Giorgio's announcement that he's being posted to a backwater. The lovers' words speak of perfection with a lyric conviction that the music can't match:

Some say happiness
Comes and goes.
Then this happiness
Is a kind of happiness
No one really knows.

Giorgio's happiness and his heroic reputation (he has rescued a wounded soldier in a skirmish with the Russian infantry) are tested by Fosca, an orphan, whose only kin is a cousin, the colonel of the regiment to which Giorgio is posted. She interrupts the banality of military dinner-table badinage with an offstage scream. It's the first we hear of her, and the noise is sensationally appropriate. Fosca (in a stunning performance by Donna Murphy) is intrusive. She knows no boundaries, and the scream broadcasts her inability to contain herself. "She is a kind of medical phenomenon," a doctor tells Giorgio. "A collection of many ills." As staged, she is also a collection of iconic trappings from gothic romance: the shadowy figure descending the long, gloomy staircase; the black-shrouded silhouette; the doomed, spectral presence. Fosca buttonholes Giorgio with her sharp intelligence while Clara, in a gorgeous pink gown, simultaneously materializes before us to sing her letter to him. Clara conjures a world of joy: the "sultry afternoon" and their sumptuous sex. Fosca, on the other hand, is a gourmand of griefs. She clutches a book; and when Giorgio, out of politeness, offers to lend her material from his library his decency gives Fosca an opening and an audience. She has taken death as her dominion, and she loses no time in selling herself as an aristocrat of anguish. "Sickness is normal to me, as health is to you," she tells Giorgio, startling his soldier's imagination. Sondheim's characterization of military life is wholly unconvincing—drum rolls, marching soldiers, and some trite lyrics:

GROUP: This military madness
This military
ALL: Uniforms, uniforms
GIORGIO: Military madness.

But when Fosca sings to Giorgio about why she reads, at once disguising and admitting her defensiveness, Sondheim is in his element, and he delivers a brilliantly insightful soliloquy about resignation. "I do not dwell on dreams," she sings to Giorgio in the show's finest song. "I know how soon a dream becomes an expectation." She goes on, exalted:

I do not hope for what I cannot have!
I do not cling to things I cannot keep!
The more you cling to things,
The more you love them,
The more the pain you suffer
When they're taken from you . . .
Ah, but if you have no expectations,
  Captain,
You can never have a disappointment.

Fosca haunts the outpost with both her grief and her envy. She is inconsolable. She will not eat. She will not laugh. She humiliates herself. She can take pleasure only in things that reflect her sense of collapse, like the ruined castle to which she offers to take Giorgio. "I find it lovely," she says. "Probably because it's ruined, I suppose." She uses her sense of blighted life to extract pity from Giorgio, whose mind is full of Clara, and whose mouth is full of romantic, symbiotic mush about "love that fuses two into one." Giorgio is a victim of his own decency. He struggles to fend off Fosca's panic-stricken emotional demands. "This woman has no friends. No one to talk to. I know the power I have over her," he explains to Clara, who has cautioned him to keep his distance. "I didn't ask for this power—she bestowed it upon me, but somehow it carries responsibilities that I can't seem to shed." Fosca plays on Giorgio's youthful omnipotence. "Understand me, be my friend," she sings to Giorgio—a plea whose pathos and empowerment he finds impossible to refuse. "They hear drums / We hear music. / Be my friend."

No barrier that Giorgio can put between them keeps Fosca away. She will not be denied. She is beyond hope or shame. This is not passion but obsession—a distinction that Sondheim's show doesn't make clear. Fosca follows Giorgio up a mountain, onto a train. She is even prepared to kill herself to get his attention, taking to her bed after she receives his Dear Fosca letter. "You rejected her love—which doesn't surprise me," the doctor tells Giorgio. "This woman is letting herself die because of you." The doctor prevails on Giorgio's

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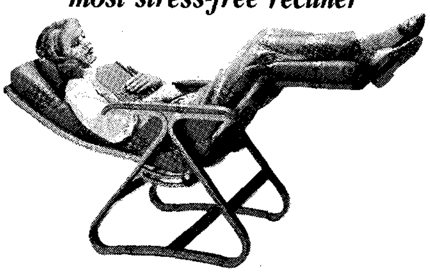

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chivalrous nature to help save a life, but in agreeing to be a savior Giorgio loses control of his own life. Fosca is so emotionally impoverished that she doesn't trust the world to give her pleasure, and the musical's best scene is a chilly display of her overweening narcissism. Giorgio, thinking Fosca is dying, allows her to dictate words of love, and he dutifully writes them down and signs them as his own. The letter will later be misconstrued by Fosca's cousin and lead to a near-fatal duel, but the writing itself is a death-dealing moment. The eerie act of ventriloquism, an un-love song, demonstrates the insidiousness of Fosca's control and shows Sondheim at his dramatically most astute. It's a powerful moment of psychological wretchedness, couched in the language of the romantic sublime:

> For now I'm seeing love
> Like none I've ever known,
> A love as pure as breath,
> As permanent as death,
> Implacable as stone.

Sondheim and Lapine fudge the issue of Fosca's infantile behavior by giving her a history (doting parents; a feckless first husband, who absconded with her money) that in no way adequately explains the trauma of abandonment that her hysteria acts out. They opt for glib sociological shorthand: shame at her husband's rejection, and humiliation, as an unmarried woman in a patriarchal society, at forever being a "daughter." Similarly, Giorgio's emotional volte-face after Clara refuses to run away with him (she's married, and would lose custody of her child) is dramatically confusing. On the rebound from Clara, he sees Fosca with new eyes, and transfers his romantic hyperbole to her almost instantaneously—as if losing the ideal of love were worse than losing the object of it. The moment is meant, I hope, to be ironic, but it is not played or received that way. Giorgio is betrayed by his romantic imagination. Fosca's possessiveness is refashioned by him into a delirium of unrequited love:

> Love without reason, love without mercy
> Love without pride or shame.
> Love unconcerned
> With being returned . . .

"Unconcerned with being returned"? Fosca's tyrannical behavior has been entirely devoted to forcing a response from Giorgio. He doesn't hear his own befuddlement; and although the lyrics address the confusion, the words have no proper purchase on the audience's

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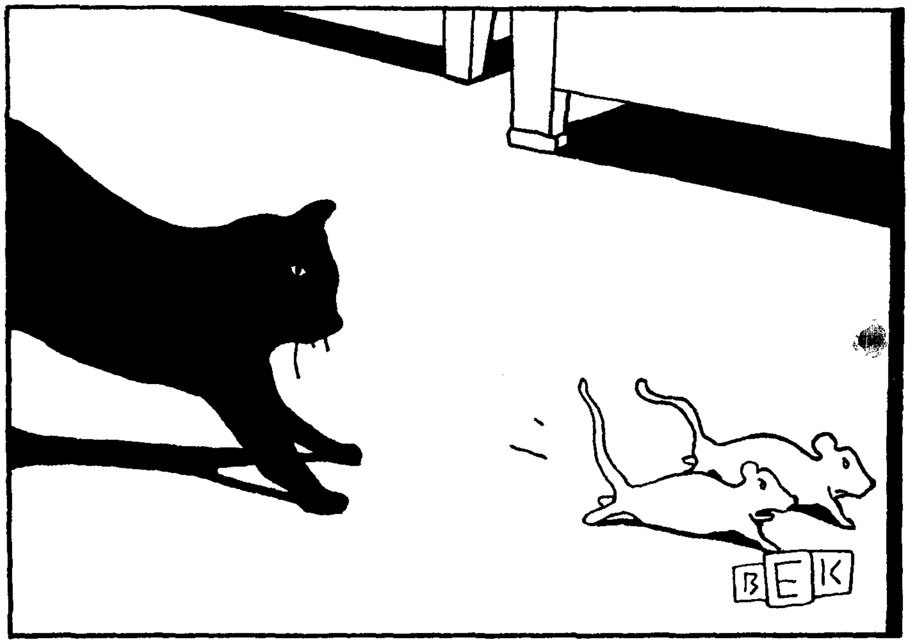
imagination, since we don't hear lyrics in the same way we hear prose. Fosca and Giorgio's embrace is the creepiest I've ever seen onstage—a kind of vampire clinch, in which Giorgio's health is exchanged for Fosca's sickness. The production cops out on this ambiguity, which the stage directions emphasize in the penultimate scene, when Giorgio thinks he has killed Fosca's cousin and lets out a high-pitched scream—"a cry that could only be reminiscent of Fosca's." But "Passion" won't explore, or even acknowledge, this irony. It is just as commercially compromised as the musicals it pretends to be in rebellion against—it's forced, presumably for box-office reasons, to claim a triumph for love at the finale ("Your love will live in me!" Fosca and Giorgio sing to each other), while never dramatically proving it. In fact, everything we've been shown in the musical belies the purity of the finale's romantic ardor. The author can't quite admit his ambivalence toward the predatory Fosca, but it makes itself felt anyway, in the curious absence of pulse in his workmanlike score.

Sondheim's music has a surface sophistication, a fussy accompaniment that allows no strong melodic arc but serves the conversational tone of the lyrics. Lapine's book also promises more than it delivers. Only Giorgio and Fosca are vividly drawn; the others are given a wash of personality, and an occasional line that gets a titter. The military scenes—and there are a lot of them—are uniformly lacklustre, and some are actually repetitious, reminding the audience of what it already knows: Fosca's unhappy, Giorgio's got a future, and soldiers are boorish. Lapine's organization of plot points is clunky; and the dialogue is too often of "The pheasants will be ready shortly" variety. His staging is more elegant. A former set designer [illegible] well as a filmmaker, Lapine conjures up strong, if sedate, stage pictures, using bold vertical lines made by panels that slide in from the wings and also work, in a cinematic way, to create dissolves. But, in a play where so much is verbalized and so little said, the grandness of the design trivializes rather than enhances the play's statement. In between the romantic wafflings, you find yourself studying Adrianne Lobel's beautifully painted backdrops, which suggest the hazy Italian countryside, or admiring the well-lit stippling on the movable panels.

On the night I saw "Passion," the audience was both unmoved and unconvinced. They were right to be. "Passion" feels like a rushed and unfinished portrait, in which the head and the hands are complete but the rest remains an unexplored outline. Yet again, Sondheim and Lapine have loaded a musical with fascinating intellectual freight—a burden that, finally, it can't carry. ♦



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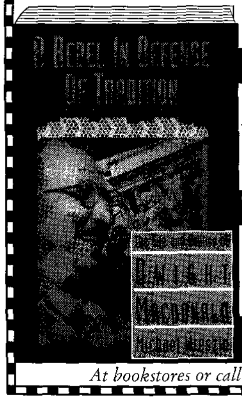

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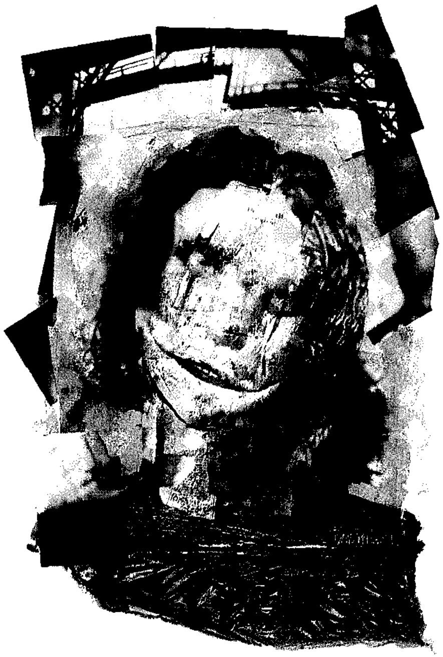
THE CURRENT CINEMA

SUPERHERO

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

ALEX PROYAS' pulp revenge fantasy "The Crow" is so dark, so moody, and so seductively overwrought that it seems to have sprung directly from the fevered consciousness of an alienated sixteen-year-old. It's an amazingly pure expression of morbid adolescent romanticism. There's no middle range of emotion here: ideal love, thwarted, turns into murderous rage—an everything-sucks nihilism that obliterates the world. The movie, which is based on a comic-book saga by James O'Barr, tells the story of a young rock musician named Eric Draven (Brandon Lee), who, guided by an otherworldly crow, returns from the grave to avenge the rape and murder of his fiancée, Shelly. His own death, at the hands of the same thugs, clearly bothers him less than the suffering inflicted on his girlfriend—images of her terror keep flashing through his mind. On the anniversary of their deaths, Eric rises and takes to the streets of Detroit—a savage wasteland that looks like a nightmare projection of his own bombed-out spirit—to hunt down the killers. He dresses in punkish black, wears ironic clown makeup (corpse-white powder, heavy eyeliner, black lipstick slashed across his cheeks in a Joker-like parody of a smile), and has long, dark hair that streams across his face like rivulets of blood. His frame has a rock star's neurasthenic elegance—the weird grace of dissolution.



Performance: Brandon Lee in "The Crow."

DAVID MCKEAN

The hero of "The Crow" is a floridly conceived love-and-death icon, the kind of mythic figure that can be either mysteriously alluring or profoundly annoying. The avenging angel in O'Barr's strikingly drawn black-and-white comics settles into the annoying category pretty quickly. Eric is a sensitive marauder, a good man driven to violence by the unfairness of life, and this psychological profile makes him seem at first an upholder of the grand Batman tradition. (Bruce Wayne's crime-fighting persona, like Eric's, is the product of trauma—in Wayne's case, the murder of his parents.) But O'Barr doesn't use the genre's robust conventions as a jumping-off point, as various adventurous comic-book artists have done in recent years; he stands still and paws the ground, as if he were trying to dig up every last bone of mythic subtext that his predecessors might have buried. By the time he's done, he's got a tunnel that takes him all the way to France, where he discovers his hero's true father—Rimbaud. Eric skulks through nighttime Detroit with a quotation from "The Triumph of Patience" hovering over him in a thought balloon: "A sick thirst darkens my veins." (In the recently published graphic-novel compilation of the "Crow" comics, two other Rimbaud poems are quoted entire on stand-alone pages.) O'Barr abandons any semblance of narrative in favor of repetitive poetic delirium. Eric's encounters with the killers—there are five of them, plus assorted henchmen—are just a series of variations on a theme,

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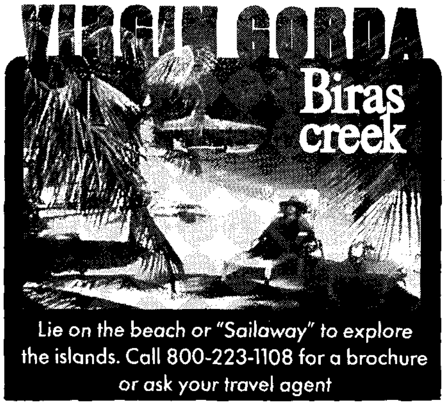
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and between battles he retreats to the aerielike garret that he shared with Shelly and broods, tormenting himself equally with happy memories and with unbearably painful flashbacks to their awful last moments together: he uses these reveries to fuel his will for the next bout of carnage. He also dons leotards and strikes modern-dance poses, grooving on the sheer *maudit*-ness of it all. A little of this goes a long way, and in the wrong direction.

The screenwriters, David J. Schow and John Shirley, have wisely eighty-sixed the Rimbaud and the leotards, and have added a few desperately needed plot complications. The hero's obsessiveness is still the central idea, but Schow and Shirley are careful not to let the story itself turn into a static, obsessive cycle of self-absorbed grief. The movie is more comic-booky than the comic book, and that's all to the good. The filmmakers have also expanded the role of the title bird, exploiting its ominous beauty for blessedly nonmetaphoric purposes. O'Barr's crow simply pops up every now and then to issue a gnomic warning to the hero. The movie's crow swoops all over the city, leading Eric to his prey, and its dreamlike flights over desolate streets help give the picture a gliding, insinuating rhythm. Proyas, whose previous experience is in commercials and music videos, has a flamboyantly artificial style that's peculiarly well suited to the pulp-mythic universe of "The Crow." It's an approach designed to sell an image, an aura of desirability, with stylized atmosphere, sexy posturing, and visual motifs that flow into each other like the notes of a pop song. With frightening mastery, Proyas fuses all the elements at his command into a coherent, smartly packaged vision of romantic angst: the urban-hell production design (by Alex McDowell), steeped in the aesthetics of squalor; the editing rhythms, hopped up and frantic in the violent scenes but as languorous as a perfume commercial's in between; the stark compositions, in which the hero, placed in the evocative ruins, seems to embody the dead-end glamour of all the wounded loners of American movies, the weary gunslingers who have to clean up the town before we'll let them fade away.

It's hokum, but it works. The villains—especially the maggoty T-Bird (David Patrick Kelly) and the bored, sadistic aesthete known as Top Dollar (Michael Wincott)—are a vividly loathsome bunch, and the filmmakers have fun inventing a different spectacular death for each of them. The movie's mayhem is, despite its grim context, rather playful; the tone isn't light, exactly, but the director's obvious delight in his own flashy dexterity gives even the weightiest happenings a kind of mischievous shine. "The Crow" is gloomy existential pulp executed with such berserk conviction that it's actually exhilarating.

The music plays a large part in sustaining the picture's oddly insistent momentum. The songs are mostly heavy metal (or metal-inflected "alternative" rock): a style that mixes, in a uniquely adolescent way, soaring grandiosity and relentless pessimism—an unholy union of doomy, dissonant chords, lunatic-asylum vocals, and beats that seem as ponderous as the footsteps of the Grim Reaper. You might think that this sort of soundtrack would heighten the oppressiveness of "The Crow" and reinforce the tendency toward bummed-out monotony that's inherent in the material—but it doesn't. It clicks so effortlessly into the picture's morose sensibility that its very aptness becomes a perverse source of pleasure. If you isolated any one of the components of this movie's fantasy world, you might be put off: the unyielding vigilante morality; the death-tripping comic-book iconography; the fast, hectic cutting of the action scenes; the queasy sense of dread created by the decaying city and the ugly, vacant-eyed predators who inhabit it; the assaultive sounds of screaming heavy-metal guitars. Yet the combination has a seamless, inevitable aesthetic coherence that's pleasing in itself; when the jagged power chords mesh with the grunts and gunshots in one elaborate action sequence, you have to laugh at the audacity and the rightness of the effect. The darkness of "The Crow" is so complete that it becomes a kind of light.

What gives the movie the allure that could make it a pop phenomenon is the performance of Brandon Lee, who incarnates this gimmicky character so unself-consciously that glum Eric seems like teen-age despair apotheosized—

Everykid as the most beautiful of losers. Lee's acting is almost entirely physical: like his father, the late martial-arts genius Bruce Lee, he moves with an animal's instinctive sureness; when he's still, his body is eloquent with possibility. In every shot, Lee makes us feel the tension between the character's numbing sorrow and his vibrant determination to do something, and this dancelike effect—of emotion held in, then released, then gathered again—provides "The Crow" with the strong core of simple human feeling that it needs. Lee died, near the end of filming, in a freakish accident on the set; he was twenty-eight. It's eerie to watch him as Eric: his death could be seen as a horrible fulfillment of the movie's dire worldview. This performance, though, has a melancholy power that doesn't depend on our knowledge of the real-life ironies of fate. Even if Lee were still alive, his acting in "The Crow" would seem uncanny—clear but somehow elusive, like the afterimage of a bird's flight.

Spike Lee's "Crooklyn," a nostalgia piece about growing up in Brooklyn in the early seventies, is slight in every respect but length. The picture runs well over two hours, and you feel every minute of it, because Lee can't seem to find a theme or a style to shape this amorphous memory-stuff into something more compelling than a home movie. The screenplay, written by the director with two of his siblings, Joie Susannah Lee and Cinqué Lee, is obviously based, to a certain extent, on the shared experiences of their childhoods, and the best scenes focus on the irritable, teasing relationships among the movie family's five kids. But fights at the dinner table and in front of the TV aren't enough to engage our attention—or, apparently, the director's—for a whole movie. Without the kind of explosive, talk-show-worthy subjects that Lee took on in "Do the Right Thing," "Jungle Fever," and "Malcolm X," his filmmaking tends to go limp (as it did, for instance, in the relatively untendentious, and utterly lifeless, "Mo' Better Blues"). And he clearly misses his longtime cinematographer, Ernest Dickerson, who is now directing films himself; Dickerson's bold imagery used to distract audiences from Lee's slack dramaturgy. In "Crooklyn" Lee mostly settles for delivering casual, off-the-cuff commentary on urban life: he's just a guy sitting on the stoop checking out what's happening on the block—not much, as it turns out.

The funniest bit in the movie is a brief scene in which Clinton (Carlton Williams), the cranky older brother of the ten-year-old heroine, Troy (Zelda Harris), is watching his favorite team, the Knicks, on television: the video clip that Lee shows us features a grisly series of blunders committed by Phil Jackson—then a valuable sixth man for the Knicks but now the coach of the hated Chicago Bulls. The Jackson-bashing digression hotfoots the picture with a flash of mean humor; at other points, "Crooklyn" is (mildly) energized by the soul music that plays incessantly on the soundtrack. It's a losing battle, though: the movie lurches forward in spurts, but keeps stalling, because all that's driving it is a sort of trivial, reflexive New York chauvinism—the stoop-sitter's perspective. Like Woody Allen and Martin Scorsese—the biggest idols in the pantheon of Big Apple filmmaking—Lee is a passionate provincial. In one excruciating sequence, "Crooklyn" takes its young heroine down South for an extended visit to her Aunt Song (Frances Foster), an uptight horror, who smothers Troy with smug suburban piety, and even messes with the girl's hip hairdo, transforming her cornrowed coif into a tight, anonymous bun. Lee's disdain for this woman, who is meant to represent the Southern way of life, is so fierce that he actually makes fun of her grief over the death of her dog—a pampered, fuzzy thing that is, implicitly, not fit to lick the paws of a cool Brooklyn pooch like Troy's own beloved pet. At moments like these, Lee's attitude-striking seems desperate, out of control. "Crooklyn" doesn't make a very convincing case for Northern-urban superiority: it's a Brooklyn dog that just lies there on the screen and sheds. ♦

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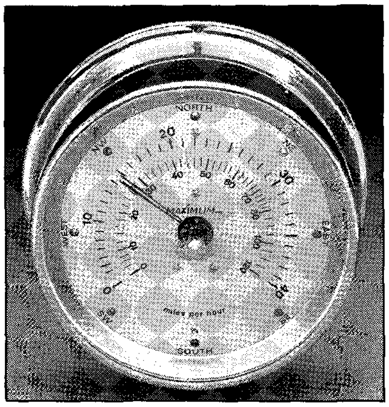

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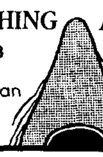

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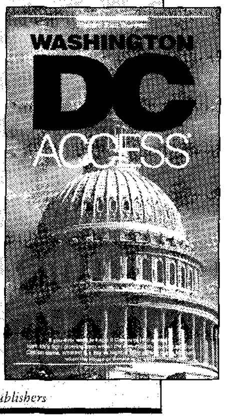

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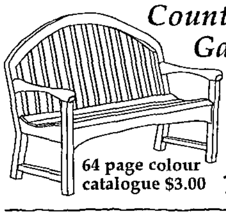
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BOOKS

GETTING TO KNOW ZHOU

BY IAN BURUMA

Eldest Son: Zhou Enlai and the Making of Modern China
by Han Suyin
(Hill & Wang; $27.50)

Bitter Winds: A Memoir of My Years in China's Gulag
by Harry Wu and Carolyn Wakeman
(John Wiley; $22.95)

HAN SUYIN'S book about Zhou Enlai, the late Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, is not a biography but an act of worship. Since *hagios* means "holy," and Han sees Zhou as a kind of saint, it is literally a hagiography. Han herself is a well-known novelist, whose voice on China, in fiction and nonfiction, has been heard by many over the years. She has been criticized, most notably by the sinologist Simon Leys, for adapting her views to the changing winds in Beijing, but in a curious way her standpoint has never wavered: it is that of the born worshipper. In the first sentence of her new book we read that people who were lucky enough to meet Zhou "felt the magic of the man's personality enhance their own lives." And, on page 10, "Those of us, like myself, who had known him, talked with him, and elected to serve him, because one could not do otherwise when one knew him, still wept, many years later, when we remembered some phrase, a gesture, the echo of his laugh in our ears. . . . He had enlarged and ennobled our days on earth, and now we continued to believe, even when assailed by defeat and despair."

Zhou Enlai was a remarkable man, to be sure. He was a handsome and sophisticated charmer who survived at the top of a crude and exceedingly uncharming regime. Foreign dignitaries visiting China's grim capital were forever being swept off their feet by Zhou's intelligence and wit. To be charming and to have the ability to run a bloody dictatorship are not necessarily contradictory qualities, of course. But you would expect some of the bloodiness to stick to the charmer's hands. Even Henry Kissinger, who admired Zhou, was puzzled by what Han calls his "moral ambivalence."

Unlike most of his comrades, Zhou, the son of a distinguished family, was a cultivated mandarin of the old school; he was as well versed in the Confucian classics as in Marxist dialectics and Mao Zedong Thought. He studied in Paris and Tokyo. He travelled all over the world. His most famous bit of repartee is widely thought to sum him up: when Khrushchev, one of the few people who failed to be enchanted by the Chinese Premier (the feeling was mutual), tried to pull rank by comparing his own working-class background with Zhou's bourgeois provenance, Zhou answered, "True, comrade, but we have something in common, you and I. Both of us are traitors to our class." In fact, Zhou's background and polish made him an excellent diplomat. Han is right to call him a great statesman. He organized the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference, in 1955, which put China on the Third World map and the Third World on the global map. He played his cards deftly during the Vietnam War. He kept the Soviet empire at bay. And without his diplomatic skills China's rapprochement with the United States in 1972 would have been far more difficult to achieve. On the home front, however, Zhou's record is more questionable. Even Han Suyin has to admit that Zhou "did not live long enough to see his 'Grand Design'—as it is called today—realized," adding, "But he bequeathed it to those who would inherit, from him and from Mao, the beloved ancestral land."

What, exactly, was Zhou's grand design? Han points out that "Zhou was not a democrat in the American sense of the word." Indeed he was not. Zhou was a dedicated Communist, who operated as a Comintern agent in Europe in the early nineteen-twenties. During that decade, he also went to Moscow, and there, in Han's not very elegant words "he probably took some lessons from the N.K.V.D. on organizing secret police." This is a bit like saying that someone took lessons from the Gestapo, for the Soviet secret-police force was every bit as murderous. Back in China in the late twenties, Zhou created the Special Department, or Te Ke, whose establishment, Han says, as delicately as she can, "reveals a man very different from the warm, humane person he undeniably was." The Te Ke specialized in death squads. Disloyalty to the Communist Party was punished by liquidation, not only of the traitor but of his or her immediate family, too.

On economic matters, Zhou's design was not wholly orthodox. Though he appears to have favored an economy that was more market-oriented than Mao, Marx, or Lenin would have liked, he was sufficiently rigorous in his Marxist-Leninist faith to consider Khrushchev a "revisionist." Han is probably right, however, to suggest that his Communism was mixed with residual Confucianism. Indeed, she writes, "He *was* a great Confucianist. His life was a fulfillment of the Sage's ideals of integrity, self-sacrifice, dedication to the welfare of the people. In him the Chinese found their ideal 'ruler.' "

If that was so, Zhou's record can only be considered a catastrophic failure. For he was one of the highest functionaries in a regime that sent millions of Chinese to their death, through famine, torture, execution, and neglect. And the people who ultimately suffered most, as a "class," were the very people Zhou was supposed to take under his wing: his own kind, as it were—the educated class, whose bravest members are still persecuted to this day. Zhou's "greatest success," in Han's words, was the creation, during the nineteen-thirties—the time of such heroics as the Long March—of "a 'second front' amid the intelligentsia." Again and again, Zhou cultivated artists and intellectuals, and tried to convince them that they had an important role to play in the New China. He also believed, no doubt sincerely, that an undesirable class background—that is to say, membership in the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, rich-peasant, or even landlord class—should not disqualify one from taking part in the new society. In 1946, before "Liberation," he called on the assistance of Shanghai capitalists, "assuring them," Han writes, "that they need have no fear of the Communists."

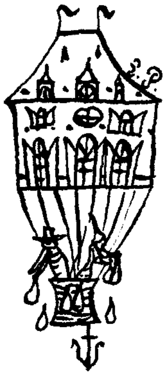
TRAGICALLY, many people took Zhou at his word, often for patriotic reasons. One such person was the father of Harry Wu, the author of "Bitter Winds." Wu's book is a useful antidote to Han's, for her empathy extends only to leaders and fellow camp followers. She gives you the official version of events—that is, events as seen from the top. Hence her bizarre shifts of opinion from book to book in her long career as a celebratory writer: the Party line is never straight. Wu's book is an account of what it actually felt like to be at the bottom. His father was a patriotic banker, just the kind of man Zhou Enlai tried to win over. He stayed in China after 1949 not out of Communist idealism but out of a desire to help rebuild his country. Soon after Liberation, however, the purges began: the "three-anti movement," against Party cadres with capitalist connections; the "five-anti movement," against capitalists and private businessmen; and the anti-rightist campaign. In 1952, Mr. Wu was seized, confined to a room for a month, and interrogated night and day by Party activists, who wanted him to denounce his boss for "financial crimes." Since he refused to make a false denunciation, he was demoted and given work as a minor clerk. He was lucky. By then, hundreds of thousands of people with the wrong class background had been hounded to death. Han Suyin observes that "these purges were probably necessary, but as usual were conducted with excesses." Or, as Zhou himself put it in a letter to Mao, "A little less zeal might have brought about better results."

If Han Suyin can be believed, however, the results were entirely satisfactory from a revolutionary point of view. For in an earlier book, entitled "Wind in the Tower" (1976), she wrote, "The five-anti movement ended in the enthusiastic self-liquidation of the private sector by the capitalists themselves." In any case, the excesses were only appetizers for the feasts still to come.

Harry Wu—born Wu Hongda—describes his time as a student and his nineteen years in China's gulag in a sober manner that stands in sharp contrast

"This is a holdup—you got a problem with that?"

to Han's eulogistic gush. In the nineteen-fifties, he was enrolled at the Beijing Geology Institute, where he tried to keep his mind off politics. But being nonpolitical was not possible in the New China. Commitment to the revolution had to be absolute. In Zhou Enlai's words (quoted by Han), "Our need is for a total change in outlook. . . . The aim of revolution is to change man himself." Wu felt obliged to apply for Party membership, but his Youth League leader made it clear that he could "become a true fighter for communism" only after he described in a public statement how his father had "betrayed and exploited the working class."



Ironically, Wu thought he would be spared from denouncing his father by the very thing that led to his undoing. In early 1957, all citizens, especially intellectuals, were called upon by the Party leaders to "let a hundred flowers bloom and let a hundred schools of thought contend." Criticism of the Party was not merely encouraged but demanded. Wu recalls that at first few people dared to express their views. Memories of the various "anti" campaigns were still fresh. But by May many people had found their voices, including Wu. He criticized the Party for persecuting innocent people, among them his elder brother, who had been severely punished for having "illicit connections with foreigners." (He had received letters from their sister in Hong Kong.) In June, the Party cracked down. The critics, inside the Party and out, were denounced as "counterrevolutionary rightists"—a label that effectively ruined their lives. Many ended up in prison or in labor camps, often for a very long time. Wu was one of them. First, banners were displayed on campus with a list of his "counterrevolutionary crimes," and a big red "X" was daubed on his name. His identity as an individual named Wu Hongda was officially obliterated. He was just a "rightist" now. Three years later, he was arrested for his crimes and sentenced to "reeducation through labor."

Zhou Enlai, Han Suyin writes, had lost. He had wished to promote dialogue and discussion, as well as a larger role for non-Communist intellectuals, but it had come to this. Han herself, she tells us in "Eldest Son," had never believed that the Hundred Flowers would succeed. Why, then, in "Wind in the Tower" did she praise the campaign for revealing "a new method for solving contradictions in a socialist society"? And why did she praise Mao for being "daring enough, percipient enough, to show how it was possible for a Party claiming to be the vanguard of the proletariat to be *infiltrated* by an exploiting class and its ideology"? The reason is simple. When she wrote these things, in the mid-seventies, the government was calling for vigilance against the "bourgeois right" and "élitism in education," so she had to be careful how she described the earlier betrayal of China's educated class. The safest thing was to kick the victims of 1957 once more and call them an "exploiting class." In the same book, there is the following startling sentence: "The slogans of the Great Leap Forward, self-reliance, doing away with old myths, burying servility and dogmatism and studying all experiences of other nations, good and bad, must continue to guide the accelerated strategy of development." Perhaps I should remind the reader of what Han is referring to here. The Great Leap, which lasted from 1957 until 1959, was Mao Zedong's scheme to transform China's economy by sheer force of will. Millions of peasants were mobilized as agricultural soldiers in rural communes. Others were drafted to work in the backyard steel furnaces that would burn overtime throughout China. Since no one dared to criticize Mao, and most competent statisticians had been purged as "rightists," production figures were little more than fantasies. The steel produced in back yards was worthless, and the farming collectives broke down through gross mismanagement of resources. The result was a famine that cost as many as thirty million lives. By 1963, the average age of those dying was slightly less than ten years old.

It was in a rural labor camp that Wu realized the full horror of the Great Leap. He and his fellow-prisoners—a mixture of common criminals and educated "rightists," like him—were so hungry that they fought over the contents of a rat's nest, or over an old bone that one man had tried to boil in the latrine, in order to soften the marrow. But before long the men were too exhausted by hunger to do anything; even the act of thinking required more energy than they could summon. And many of them died, usually after their pale, emaciated faces took on a rosy color—a sign of edema. The prisoners called this "the last redness of the setting sun." The most terrifying thing about those years, however, was that life in many rural villages was even worse than life in prison. Prevented from moving to the towns, people were left to starve.

Han Suyin no longer defends the Great Leap, so at least some progress has been made. And she says, probably correctly, that Zhou had always had his reservations about the experiment. But what did he do about it? He refused to criticize Mao at the Lushan conference in 1959, when "mistakes" were finally admitted. Instead, "he spoke to the cooks," Han writes. " 'Remember the Chairman likes his food with red chili.' It had become second nature to Zhou to care for Mao's bodily comforts, as he cared for his wife's, for his friends'. But he was also exhibiting his affection for the Chairman, possibly to make Mao feel he was revered and loved, for he sensed how mortified, how heartsick Mao must be, now that his grandiose scheme had broken down." As the result of a dictator's whim, tens of millions died (a fact not mentioned by Han), and Zhou makes sure the dictator gets his chili. If it weren't so ghastly, it would be funny. Han sees this demonstration of tact as a sign of Zhou's loyalty and his deep sense of political responsibility. She argues that Zhou had to save face for Mao, for without Mao at China's helm the Soviet Union, led by the "revisionist" Khrushchev, would have gained too much power at China's expense. Realpolitik, then, was worth the price of shrugging off millions of deaths. It's no wonder that Kissinger was struck by Zhou's moral ambivalence.

IN 1966, a year after Harry Wu nearly died in a solitary cell only "slightly larger than a coffin," the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began. In theory, the Cultural Revolution was a political conflict—a revolt of pure, "permanent" revolutionaries against conservative bureaucrats. In reality, the rebellion, stirred up by Mao himself, was a complicated tangle of various factions and leaders tearing at one another's throats to dominate the Party. In a way, it was Mao's attempt to make up for the face he had lost at the failure of the Great Leap Forward. Ideological differences were an excuse for purging rivals, by setting millions of oppressed adolescents upon their elders, like hungry rats unleashed on a wounded cat.

Personal warfare among the powerful was mirrored in a crude way at Wu's prison camp. The Cultural Revolution offered an opportunity for old scores to be settled, for bullies and toadies to assert themselves, for frustration to be vented in acts of violence. Denounced by a fellow-inmate, a man called Guo was tortured for allegedly having scribbled a counter-revolutionary slogan on a cigarette package. Outside the camp, thousands were beaten to death for much less. Wu didn't know it at the time, but his father was assaulted while being publicly denounced by his daughter as a "stinking reactionary." And Wu's brother was hurt so badly that he suffered permanent brain damage. In a curious way, a "rightist" was safer behind the barbed wire of a camp. Wu was viciously beaten during one "struggle session," but, he writes, "in 1967 and 1968 I had no idea that the violence in some parts of the country had moved beyond the level of social turmoil to a kind of civil war."

Zhou Enlai, given his bourgeois background and his cosmopolitanism, was lucky not to have been purged himself. The Gang of Four and their supporters would have dearly liked to oust him. But his loyalty to Mao—whose position at the top he never challenged—and some very deft political footwork kept him from falling victim to the Red Guards. His strategy was to wave his Little Red Book and support the Cultural Revolution, while trying to contain some of its worst excesses. He managed to save a number of people, but not Mao's main rival in the Party—the President, Liu Shaoqi. In 1968, Zhou signed the document expelling Liu from the Party. Liu was denounced as a "capitalist roader" and thrown in jail; he died a year later in his own frozen excrement, having been denied proper food and medication.

Han mentions Liu's death only in passing. Her main interest is finding excuses for Zhou's behavior. The excuses are the same ones used by many Nazi collaborators after the war. If Zhou hadn't maintained his position, the truly bad guys would have taken over, and things would have been much worse. Han quotes Zhou's formidable wife, Deng Yingchao, who said, reflecting on her husband's travails, and specifically on his role in purging Liu Shaoqi, "It was painful, so painful for Enlai, but he had to do it . . . he kept the larger view in mind." There is no doubt that it was painful. Zhou hated disorder, and he was not a bloodthirsty man. His brave attempts to protect at least some people from the Red Guards were rare instances of decency in the midst of bloody mayhem. The Cultural Revolution was so disastrous—in terms of human lives lost, of a generation deprived of schooling, of economic disruption, and of the wholesale destruction of China's heritage—that it was painful to just about everyone. It is the one episode in Communist Chinese history that it is perfectly safe to criticize in China. Yet we can rely on Han Suyin to find some good words to say about it: "One day, Mao's wave of populism against the Communist bureaucratic machine might be appraised differently, as the Paris Commune has been."

Unwittingly, Han has painted a deeply tragic portrait of Zhou Enlai. He was tragic not because he didn't live to see his grand design realized but because his grand design was to a large extent responsible for the excesses he himself deplored. And neither he nor, apparently, his hagiographer ever understood this. For the terror unleashed by the revolution was not solely a question of "excesses." It was the result of a very simple idea, held by Zhou until the end of his life—the idea that a New Man had to be forged, through propaganda, reform, self-criticism, struggle sessions, and the like, before a New Society could take shape. Man had to be made to fit the ideal, and not the other way round. Zhou wrote in 1919, "To bring about the new, one must first change one's own heart."

This view does contain a kernel of Confucianism. Cultivation of the self or the heart through a study of the Confucian classics is the duty of a Confucian

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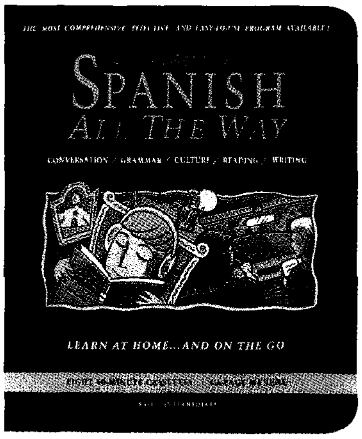
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gentleman, and Zhou applied this notion to his revolutionary politics. During the Cultural Revolution, he wrote that "many people who come from a bad class background can reform themselves." He said that he himself had been "born into a corrupt feudal family, but saved by following Mao Thought." But true Confucian gentlemen never sought to impose their brand of spiritual cultivation on the general populace. They were much too snobbish for that. Zhou's belief that anyone could be molded into a New Man or Woman if given sufficient time and reëducation was a definite departure from Confucianism. (Not all Chinese Communists agreed with Zhou's formula; some believed that a bourgeois background put one forever outside the pale.)

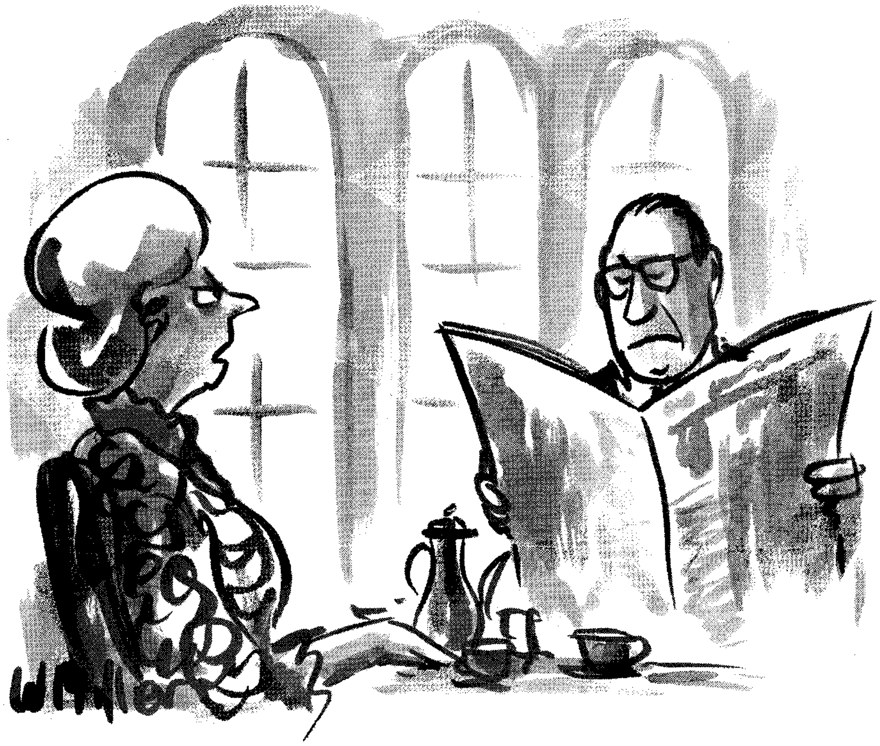
The idea that a particular dogma, whether Confucianism or Mao Zedong Thought, can serve as a canon of moral truth, which must be fully—and, above all, sincerely—absorbed before one can be reborn as a new and better person, is more religious than political. In struggle sessions and labor reform, it wasn't enough merely to repeat the dogma, after being beaten and humiliated; you had to convince your tormentors that you sincerely believed in it. This form of mental torture—made worse by the fact that the dogma was continually changing, often dramatically—was, apart from hunger and maltreatment, the distinguishing feature of the Hell that Wu Hongda lived in for nineteen years. And a large number of people are living in it still.

Zhou was a revolutionary, but he was also a patriot. He believed in the destiny of China. So, obviously, does Han Suyin, the daughter of a Chinese father and a Belgian mother. And, given her predilection for worship, Zhou was her ideal Chinese guru. The hours he gave her "unselfishly," she wrote (in "Tigers and Butterflies," of 1990), "were the most precious gifts that life would ever give me." And she expressed the hope that "a new generation will read him, will be inspired by him, will realize that he is immortal, because he served China and the Chinese people with every cell in his body." The only explanation I can come up with for Han Suyin's enduring reputation in the West is the widespread tendency among Western intellectuals to look to the exotic East for spiritual solace and political utopia. Zhou Enlai, the charming mandarin, is their ideal guru, too.

WU HONGDA'S release from the Chinese gulag finally came in 1979, three years after the death of Zhou Enlai. Even then, Wu was warned by a well-wisher in the Party that because he was a former "rightist" his "tail" was "longer than anyone else's." Wu had learned his lesson: "The Communist Party would tolerate only those who tucked their tails between their legs and bowed before its absolute authority. I could not do that. I began to think seriously about going abroad." In 1985, after waiting four years to get his passport, Wu left for the United States, with forty dollars in his pocket.

But Harry Wu could find no peace until he had exposed the Chinese gulag to the world. In 1991, he returned to China, with his Taiwanese wife, Ching-lee, and members of the staff of "60 Minutes." Carrying a hidden video camera, he and Ching-lee went back to the camp where he had almost starved to death, and Ching-lee managed to film the camp through a hole in her shoulder bag. Posing as an American businessman, he talked to the commanders of other camps, who told him proudly how much money was being made in export sales from the prisoners' labor. He went back to a coal mine where he had worked as a slave. Alone, taking an extraordinary risk, he managed to videotape a number of camps in the far west of China. He noted that "labor conditions seemed not to have changed since 1969."

Harry Wu Hongda, the former "counterrevolutionary rightist," is a Chinese patriot, and so is Wei Jingsheng, the indomitable spokesman for democracy in China, and so are all the other people who continue to risk their lives to this end. Han Suyin, for her part, can't resist sneering at the Chinese students who rebelled in 1989: "Greed and self-serving, impatient puerility have surfaced. These are only too easily disguised under the word 'democracy.' " The correct way forward, she writes in the epilogue to her celebration of Zhou—once again parroting the latest Party line—is to make economic reforms "before attempting any political liberalization." And she predicts that Zhou's ideal of a consensus between the Communist Party and the non-Communist parties in China will finally be realized. One can only conclude from this that, while Harry Wu learned his lesson in the hardest possible way, Han Suyin will remain a believer until the end. ♦



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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

VERSE

Like Most Revelations
by Richard Howard
(Pantheon; $20)

RICHARD HOWARD'S tenth collection begins with a concise lyric statement of his creed, aesthetic and otherwise, and this note of confession dominates the volume. Howard has always been the most supersubtly Venetian of American poets—adopting the tactics of encirclement and indirection, and deploying, in his signature dramatic monologues, the voices of other people from other eras to shore up an imaginative order besieged by the elements of time and history. The recent poems also have a plainspokenness that is new to Howard's work. Many are elegies, and there are two superb monologues in the form of letters—the first in the voice of Bonnard writing to Matisse during the Second World War about the fate of their mutual and Jewish picture dealer, and the second in that of an anonymous AIDS victim communicating with the *Times*—in which Howard confronts the most frighteningly irrational antagonists of the realms of art and reason and humanity. These two poems and their companions gleam with intelligence, and, the irony of the volume's title notwithstanding, they are indeed revelatory.

Selected Poems
by Derek Mahon
(Penguin; $12)

THE selections here from the Irish poet Derek Mahon's work look and feel like anthology pieces, a fact that has as much to do with Mahon's fortunate relationship to his poetic ancestry (Yeats and Auden, MacNeice and Kavanagh) as it does with the astonishing excellence of his writing. His poems resemble palimpsests on which the erased but still legible marks of the past add a continuous depth and lustre to an immensely pertinent present. They deal with universal themes—love, the bitter impression of loss, private and political griefs—and their impeccable technique and the dry, unemphatic beauty of their tone never prevent them from being dishevelled and disquieting in all the right ways. Elegant and controlled as he is, Mahon remains a poet in the service of the untamed and irreconcilable elements in his experience.

Earthly Measures
by Edward Hirsch
(Knopf; $20)

THE poems in Hirsch's fourth collection are often about the aftermath of enlightenment, the moment, as in "Man on a Fire Escape," just after a blazing sunset, when we can't be sure what it was we saw. Hirsch is, in a way, perpetually on the fire escape—a landscape artist of the man-made world. In one poem, Orpheus stumbles up from the depths like "a miner rescinding his steps" to wander a sooty plain dotted with slag heaps and broken silos. Hirsch's clarity amid the wreckage is combined, to strangely fruitful effect, with his inclination to be a literary student and son: there are poems here about Simone Weil as a factory worker, Henry James in Rome, and Donald Barthelme, "wry veteran/of the unresolved and the self-divided," who in Hirsch's remembrance emerges as the ideal late-twentieth-century weatherman.

Selected Poems
by Charles Olson
(California; $25)

OLSON, since his death, in 1970, has become something of a ghost at the banquet of American poetry—a writer more remembered than read, and more remembered for his visionary ideas about poetry (which seem to rebuke our less adventurous literary era) than for the work itself. This selection, by Robert Creeley, should go far toward helping Olson's spirit rest easy. Creeley has presented the poems in such a way that they speak for themselves; and, shorn of their surrounding mythologies—all the famous talk about the open field, process and reality, projective verse—they seem more beautiful than ever. Olson had a golden ear, and there are places of great lyric clarity and tenderness in the associative swirl of his writing—places that remind us how accessible this most austere and uncompromising of modernist masters could be.

Marconi's Cottage
by Medbh McGuckian
(Wake Forest; $8.95)

IN this Northern Irish poet's fourth book, domestic scenes inspire fervent explorations of being. McGuckian's complex poems on commonplace themes turn inward, where "My words will be without words/Like a net hidden in a lake." As with her two most obvious influences, Emily Dickinson and John Ashbery, McGuckian seems to inhabit a kind of internal exile, but here the exploration of subject matter, of motherhood or birth or the local weather, serves as a tacit response to the Troubles, and is thus a political act. In the best of these plangent and difficult poems McGuckian asserts and then subverts the pentameter, an ironic formal gesture that allows her to wander in the shadow of history, under "gold-enclosed/Irish clouds, rocking their past/In their arms as if they were still in their/Army uniforms."

The Puberty Tree
by D. M. Thomas
(Bloodaxe/Dufour Editions; $18.95)

BY turns cynical and rhapsodic, spiritual and worldly, Thomas is able to blend the lyric impulse with the dramatic monologue. His themes of bondage and liberation, attachment and estrangement, mystery and identity owe much to the mood and the methodology of both Freudian analysis and Sartrean existentialism. Indeed, against that cultural background his scenes—erotic combats, family snapshots, reconstructions of anthropological myths or historical figures, sojourns in science fiction, evocations of a Cornish boyhood—gain in resonance, cohesion, and panache. This landmark collection includes new poems as well as works from Thomas's ten previous volumes of verse. ◆

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

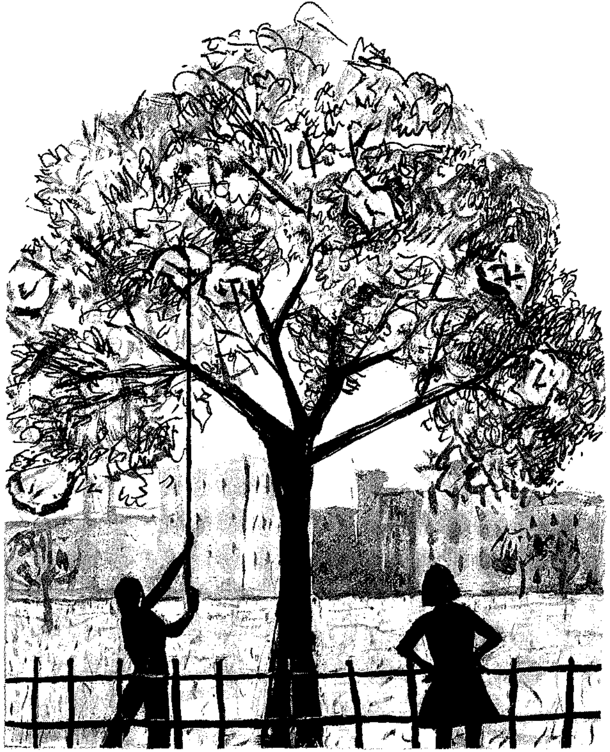
BAGS IN TREES II

BY IAN FRAZIER

LAST year in this space I talked about the phenomenon of plastic bags stuck in trees. I did not mention one fact: I don't like plastic bags stuck in trees. Maybe it was a mistake to notice them in the first place; now I notice them everywhere. The London plane trees on my street in Brooklyn are old for city trees, and have grown toward the light and away from the buildings, so that now they lean over the street and nearly meet. In a high branch just across from my window, a cluster of plastic party balloons and ribbons on a stick became lodged in the late nineteen-eighties. I watched it go from sort of festive to unrecognizable as it persisted like a debt. Storms that strewed branches all over the street did not budge it. One day, I told my friend Tim about it, and we considered what to do.

At Space Surplus Metals, on Church Street, downtown, we bought one eight-and-a-half-foot and one seven-foot length of stout aluminum tube about an inch across. One length of tube just fit inside the other. Tim is a jeweller, and he took both tubes to his shop and drilled holes in them so they could be held together by a bolt and nut, and he made a device to fit into the other end of the narrower length. This device was a configuration of short, bendable steel rods soldered to a piece of brass pipe. It looked, very roughly, like a hand with crooked and spread fingers, the middle finger longer, upright, and sharpened into a cutting hook. Assembled, the snagger (as we called it) was about sixteen feet long. Tim brought it to my house early one morning, and we put it together. It lacked about two feet of reaching the party balloons. I went back inside and got a kitchen stool. Tim is tall, and he stood on the stool on tiptoe. The hook end of the snagger made contact. A few twists, a few pulls, and the ancient remnants fell to the sidewalk. The tree seemed to shiver like an unsaddled horse.

We walked all over my neighborhood plucking bags. The snagger worked great—a twist of the crooked metal fingers would inveigle the bag, then the sharpened hook would cut it free. In just a few hours, we had removed scores of bags. Old, shredded ones took a lot of monkeying around with, but new, fresh ones sometimes came free in a single motion. The sensation was like having your arm suddenly extended sixteen feet, and the satisfaction like getting something out of your eye. Dangling above traffic makes the bags sooty, and they soon turned our hands a graphite color. A woman passed by, looked at us, and said, "Oh, it's the bag-removal guys." Then she asked us to go to her house and remove some bags from the trees in front. She carefully gave us her address. After she walked on, Tim said, "She doesn't know there *are* no bag-removal guys."



Recently, Tim made another length for the snagger. Now we can insinuate it more than twenty-five feet through the airy upper realms of ginkgos and lindens and oaks to snatch bags that had eluded us before and had assumed that they had tenure. Last weekend, we were snagging at Collect Pond Park, a bestrewn square plot of pavement and scuffed dirt and benches surrounded by court buildings downtown. Tim's brother, Bill, came, too, and we spelled each other. Holding your arms up that long is tiring. Tim climbed on a "Don't Walk" sign to reach a very high pink plastic bag. We also removed a leather belt, a pair of sneakers, an electrical cord and plug, and some tulle. We spent an hour on a bunch of unidentifiable plastic—a drop cloth, maybe—draping the branches like an exploded fright wig. People stared at us in uneasy incomprehension. The next day, there were nine new bags in two of the trees we had cleaned.

In the Ohio town where I grew up, only the church steeples were higher than the trees. Trees occupied the region between us and the sky, and we spent a lot of time looking up into them to see how strong the wind was, or daydreaming. Plastic bags did not get stuck in them, but I did. Once, I climbed an elm in our back yard and wedged my leg between the trunk and a nearly parallel branch. I could not get my arms around the tree to hold on, and so dangled by my leg and yelled. My mother ran to the house being built across the street and workmen came with a long two-by-four and pried me free. ♦

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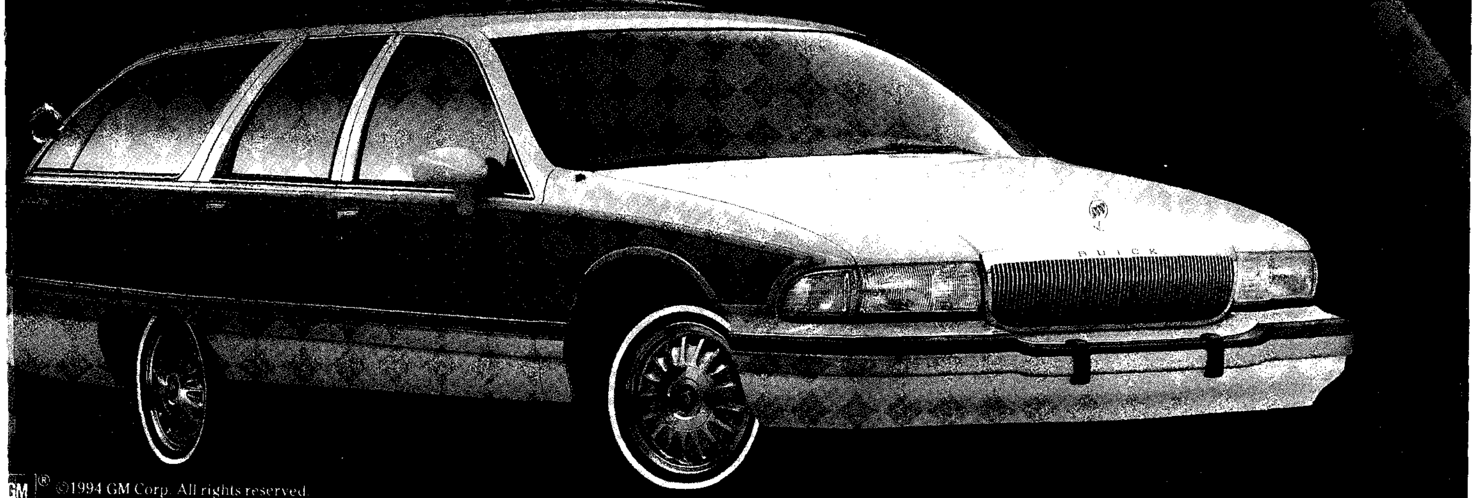

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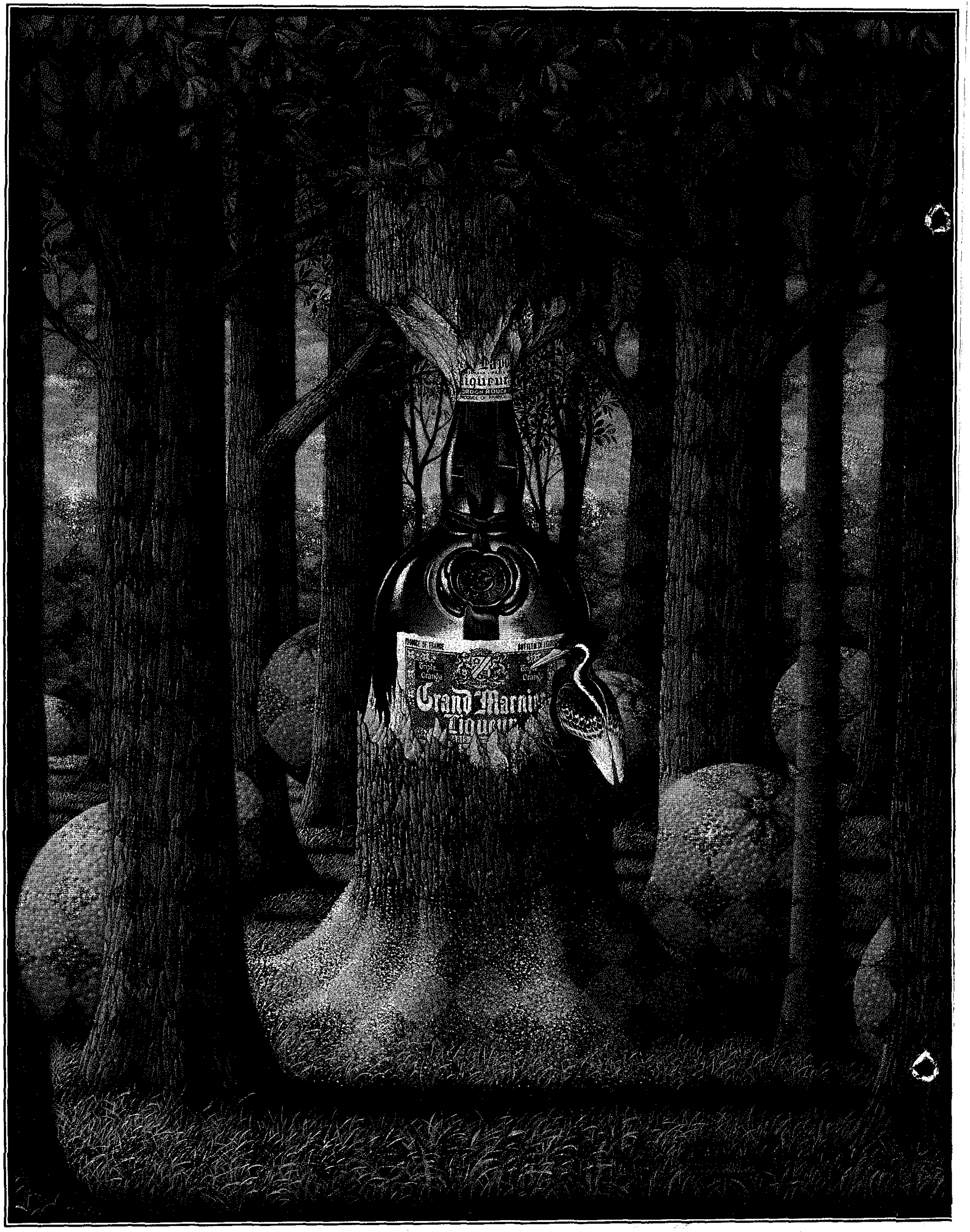
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